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WOMEN'S ENROLMENT AND PARTICIPATION ISSUES AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

by

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©

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Women's Enrolment and Participation Issues at the Open University of Tanzania* submitted by Edith George Mhehe in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Leadership.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my brother Reverend Joseph Jonas Ringo, whose pleadings with my mother freed me from the family house chores to study with my brothers in the evenings in the male house ("banda" in Kiswahili, "itengo" in my Kichagga vernacular, - meaning male secluded accommodation on the family compound) to enable me achieve my primary school education which was the nucleus to achieving my Ph.D. studies.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated difficulties faced by Tanzanian women considering or participating in higher education through the Open University of Tanzania and identified ways the University can enhance the participation of women by focusing on the questions: What barriers keep women from enrolling for higher education with the OUT? What difficulties do women students experience while studying with the OUT? What can the OUT do to enhance the enrollment of women? What can the OUT do to improve the learning conditions and study experiences for the women students?

A qualitative interview study was employed in seventeen regions in Tanzania with OUT women students and their non-student women friends, and OUT staff. Data were gathered from interviews, discussions, observations and documentation, while analysis of data occured throughout the research period.

The study demonstrated that women experience institutional and societal barriers. The institutional barriers related to OUT funding shortfalls, and lack of publicity including adequate information about studying at a distance. The societal barriers were linked to cultural expectations and religious influences regarding women's roles, including the marginalization of women's concerns, patriarchial control, early marriages, and little societal support.

The study also demonstrated that women experienced personal difficulties and problems with OUT operations. The personal difficulties linked to societal lack of support, competing and conflicting family concerns and social discouragement. Operational concerns involved the OUT course delivery model, delays in assignments and feedback, limited access to resources, physical and social isolation from support services and other female students, uncertainty, lack of confidence.

Recommendations include more extensive publicity and orientation sessions, a redesign of the course delivery model and support services, increased gender awareness for OUT staff and funding partnerships to introduce new communications technologies.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

> Unless women think much more deeply about themselves, make sense of their experiences and expectations in reference to their own needs and interests, and consider strategies of redefining the relationship with men in ways which will change the distribution of power and oppression to one of equality and respect, learning new roles will continue to be a poor substitute for the practice of freedom and liberation. (Thompson, 1983, p.106)

> Education and training are basic human rights. The state has an obligation to protect and advance these rights so that all citizens irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age, have the opportunity to develop their capacities and potential, and make their full contribution to the society. (South African Institute for Distance Education, 1995, p. 25)

Since its independence, Tanzania has been committed to the development of its people through education and self reliance (Nyerere, 1968), but to date, the participation rates of Tanzanian women in higher education are far behind those of their male counterparts. I believe that Tanzanian women are limited in their higher education aspirations by their many societal responsibilities involving child bearing, child upbringing, and general family care and by societal attitudes towards women which expect them to accept major responsibility for the society. My special interest and concern for Tanzanian women grows from my own experiences as a woman in Tanzanian society and as the founding Dean of the Faculty of Education at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). I wish to identify and investigate the barriers and difficulties which women have faced in accessing higher education and to provide recommendations to OUT about appropriate changes in curriculum and operational arrangements to better meet Tanzanian women's needs.

The OUT was the second single mode distance teaching university established in Africa south of the Sahara after the South African Open University "SAOU" (UNISA) and the first post-secondary distance teaching institution in Tanzania. Since its inception in 1992, it has expanded rapidly. By June 1997, it consisted of the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences; Education; Science, Technology and Environmental Studies; Law; and

the Institutes of Continuing Education and Educational Technology (OUT, 1997a, p. 1). The University has 21 regional centres, 20 on the Tanzania mainland and one for the whole of Zanzibar. Nineteen Regional Centres with 44 Study Centres throughout the country are fully operational (OUT, 1997b; OUT, 1996a). At the OUT, distance education involves independent study using selected print materials (texts and study guides), audio-cassette and radio programs, and occasional small group meetings [face-to-face-sessions] with tutors at regional and local study centres (OUT, 1993a, p.6). The tuition fees (including essential reading texts and examination fees) were considered affordable for most Tanzanians by the Presidential Committee responsible for getting the OUT started. Students were required to pay 79,000 Tanzanian shillings during the first year and 72, 000 Tanzanian Shillings each following year when the OUT started, when the minimum wage in Tanzania was 35,000 Tanzanian Shillings per month.

Distance education means the provision of education through the use of technology which enables teaching and learning to take place when the teacher and the learner are partially or wholly removed from each other in time and space (OUT, 1993a, p. 6). Perry and Rumble (1987) succinctly defined distance education to mean that there must be a link between the tutor and the learner using a medium of instruction such as radio or print; and Parer (1993) and Bates (1991) described distance learning as flexible, yet structured in ways that students can study in their own time and place without coming to on-campus lectures.

Paul (1990, pp. 40-53) explained the term open learning. He said that open learning means different things to different people, and that the term "open" applies to different degrees of "openness" when used in different distance teaching institutions as they engage in their actual operations. He said that universities applying a policy of open admission usually have very few restrictions to entry compared to universities which have strict selection policies such as entrance requirements, time constraints, financial demands, and geographical distances. He cautioned, however, that there cannot be a completely open university institution in practical terms for that would amount to the "de-schooling" discussed by Illich (1971). At the OUT, "open" refers both to providing admission to university education for aspiring Tanzanians who qualify but could not secure admission at the residential universities in Tanzania due to limited space, and to

making the education more flexible, economical and public (OUT, 1995, p. 5-6). Specifically, more Tanzanians will be able to access university education through the OUT and students at the OUT will be able to receive university education while they continue with the task of nation-building as well as carrying out their family responsibilities. This means that the OUT's admission policy has the following minimum entrance requirements: Certificate of Secondary Education Examination or equivalent, with passes in five approved subjects, obtained prior to sitting the Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education Examination or equivalent (OUT, 1996b, p. 4); aged 18 years and above; ability to pay tuition fees (OUT, 1996b, p. 13-15 and OUT 1995, p. 13-15). The OUT offers the following advantages that help justify the "open": removal of time constraints in that the degree takes six years to study instead of the three years used by the conventional universities (OUT, 1995, p. 8-9), but students can take shorter than six years if they work hard, or longer up to eight years if they are very slow (OUT, 1998a, p. 8); and removal of geographical distances in that the OUT has opened up OUT regional centres and their local study centres enabling students to receive and or access study materials and tutoring in their local study centres which are closest to their homes and working places and they do not have to come to the Dar-Es-Salaam OUT campus (OUT, 1996b, pp. 75-81; OUT, 1995, pp. 13-15).

NEED FOR THE STUDY

In justifying the establishment of a comprehensive open university in Tanzania, the then Minister for Education emphasized the university's importance in filling the gap left by conventional universities through opening up learning opportunities for the less advantaged in higher education, especially women. The impetus for this justification came from overwhelming evidence obtained from universities that offer distance education in other countries (Tanzania Ministry of Education, 1990, pp. 58-59). The student enrollment record at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) after the January 1997 intake showed that the percentage of women students registered with the university since its first intake in 1994 had remained at about 11 percent (409 female students out of a total of 3,811 students) of the total student population of the University (OUT, 1997b). By way of comparison, the percentage of women enrolled in other distance education

universities (for example, Deakin University, Australia; The British Open University, United Kingdom; Andhra Pradesh University (now called Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University), India; Sri Lanka Open University, Sri Lanka; Sukhothai Thammathirat University, Thailand) ranged between 40 and 60 percent of the total student population (Tanzania, Ministry of Education, 1990, p. 59). At Athabasca University, Canada, women have constituted 60 percent of the total student population for the last ten years (A. Delorme, personal communication, September 23, 1997).

The OUT has been concerned with low female participation rates and has taken a number of initiatives including the provision of a Dean of Students to counsel and encourage students. It is expected that because the Dean is a female it will be easier for her to understand women students' problems so as to guide and encourage them. The OUT (1993b) using the NCI and the University of Nairobi distance learners' experiences, identified possible problems that might confront its students as they participate in distance learning at the OUT. Among the major problems identified in the study were: physical and intellectual isolation from the teaching institutions, teachers and fellow students; delayed feedback on students' assignments; the method of instruction being novel to the students; competing interests for the student's time and attention, especially work and family responsibilities; limited access to additional learning resources and other facilities; studying alone thus causing uncertainty about many things; biased attitudes about distance education mode of delivery; lack of confidence on the part of students and in the system; non-studying peers discouraging the enrolled students; conflict of interests between study and family; lack of funds to pay fees and other school-related costs; and students' inadequate exposure to non-print media (pp.19-20). However, without a clearer understanding of the specific barriers which potential and continuing (registered) female students face, the University will not be able to ensure the necessary increases in participation and completion rates of women students.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study investigated the difficulties faced by Tanzanian women who are considering or participating in higher education through the OUT and identified ways in which the University can enhance the participation of women.

Specifically the study explored responses to the following questions:

What barriers keep women from enrolling in higher education with the OUT?

What can the OUT do to enhance the enrollment of women?

What difficulties do women students experience while studying with the OUT?

What can the OUT do to improve the learning conditions and study experience for women students?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined in the context of this study:

Learning Conditions

The place where an OUT woman student lives and works, and which she also uses for studying purposes as a distant learner. Specifically, the residential house of the learner, and the office room, building, or space where the learner spends her time for wage or non-wage employment. This includes access to space, light, supplies and a storage area.

Study Experiences

The quality and quantity of tutoring and evaluation received by a woman student from the OUT through study materials, in radio programming, audio cassettes, or print sent to her or provided in libraries and study centres, and the actual teaching and evaluation done by the tutors during orientation, face-to-face, timed tests and annual examination sessions.

Operational Arrangements

The interactive procedures laid down by the OUT that a woman student has to go through in order to manage her studies. These include among others: procedures and activities for orientation, face-to-face, timed tests, and annual examination sessions; and communication with the OUT personnel for purposes of obtaining information on her studies, or acquiring study material and or sending or receiving feedback on her written assignments, tests, and examinations.

Institutional Barriers

Limitations which hamper/prevent peoples' intended development, and they originate from the organization/institute (such as university/college) where the people, community/society go for a particular study/training to achieve the intended

development. In this research institutional barriers are linked to policy issues concerning OUT running costs and publicity which restrain women's opportunities.

Societal/Social-cultural Barriers

Limitations which hamper/prevent peoples' intended development by influencing their way of understanding, attitudes, and practices, which originate from the peoples' own practices, beliefs, values and expectations of their own ways of life such as traditions of doing certain tasks in the society, ways of treating different groups of people (children, adults; women, men), and religious practices. In this research Societal barriers are linked to cultural expectations and religious influences which restrain women's opportunities.

Operational Difficulties

Constraints experienced by women who are planning to enroll or are already enrolled with the OUT as they go through the OUT laid down procedures of admission, registration, learning/studying, training, and evaluation as process for distance learning institution of post-secondary education to achieve credentials.

Personal Difficulties

Competing and conflicting family vis-à-vis studying tasks that constraint a woman who is planning to enroll, register, or participate in OUT programs in the laid down procedures of admission, registration, studying, training, and evaluation of OUT as process for distance learning institution of post-secondary education in order to achieve credentials.

BELIEFS

I believe in the importance of encouraging women to enroll in post-secondary education not only because it will enable them to be more informed and aware, but also because these women will understand the value and importance of education. They will be better prepared to participate in the economic activities of the society and to encourage children to participate in post-secondary education. In this way, more women will be able to get better jobs with better pay and more respect in their society; they will be able to meet the costs of living for themselves and their children and therefore, be independent and attain better or equal rights in their society, and they will be mothers who will be real models for their children to emulate and to assist in the development of their society.

My familiarity with the OUT as a tutor and the founding Dean of the Faculty of Education leads me to believe that: (a) distance education can provide a quality learning experience for women, and one which will support women with multiple family and social obligations, (b) The OUT is anxious to expand access to women and to consider actions which will enhance women's success and achievements, and (c) that if asked why many women do not enroll for higher education with the OUT, the women's responses are likely to include communication, family, economic, gender, and social support issues.

BIASES

As a faculty member of the OUT, I recognize that I was seen to represent my organization. I tried to ensure that sufficient trust was developed so that participants could fully share their opinions about the OUT. I did this through spending time with participants, asking them focused questions, probing their responses carefully, and listening to their own stories on these issues. I observed situations in local and regional centre, and reviewed OUT documents critically. I also followed clearly documented procedures in my data analysis to avoid inadvertently supporting my own beliefs about distance education and women's participation in the OUT.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Young, Perraton, Jenkins, and Dodds (1980) stated that distance teaching through the use of radio, print and group meetings offers developing countries a counter to the traditional classroom, and can be used to teach better methods of health and agriculture, as well as the basic school subjects, and it is more economical. In their opinion, the approach brings far more effective, immediate and relevant educational resources to millions who would otherwise lack the education; it also helps share the world's educational resources. According to Zindi and Aucoin (1995), for most African countries, where competing basic needs, such as food, health, education and transport, posed great problems for governments who were trying to accommodate the sustenance of their people, distance education provided an answer for it needed less investment in terms of physical facilities and personnel. They stated that:

> If properly managed and organized, distance education is indeed cost-effective. Distance education is an individualized form of instruction and is therefore capable of catering for individual needs. It is also flexible. A student can work at his/her own pace during his/her own time and there is no age limit as to who should take distance education courses. People who would otherwise be marginalized by the conventional education system such as women with children, workers and disabled people, can take courses through distance education because of its flexibility. (p. 32)

The First Tanzanian President, Julius Kambarage Nyerere (cited in Young et al., 1980) noted that developing countries lack schools and the few that exist are in poor condition. Therefore, a major part of Tanzania's response to her education problems has been to create distance teaching programs particularly for training teachers (p. 4). Earlier, Nyerere (1968) had explained that education systems in different countries have been, and are, very different in organization and content. This is because the societies providing the education are different and because education, be it formal or non-formal, has a purpose for the society providing it. He defined that purpose as that of transmitting from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society, and to prepare the younger generation for the future membership of that society and active participation in its maintenance and development. Tanzania has, since its national independence in 1961, committed its people to development through an educational revolution (p. 49). From this perspective, although Tanzanian people had earlier experiences of distance education, Tanzania's first effective distance education began in 1970 with the merging of those earlier systems with the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) (Zindi & Aucoin 1995, p. 33). However, as 1997 figures for OUT indicate, the numbers of women participating in higher distance education are relatively few, about 11% of the total distance learning students' population registered with the OUT (OUT, 1997b), while female undergraduate enrollment in the conventional universities of Dar-Es-Salaam and Sokoine, as a percentage of total enrollment between 1986-1990, was 18.8% (Tanzania, Ministry of Education and Culture, 1991, p. 35). As a background to the research focus, distance education, in general and in Tanzania, is described in the following sections.

Distance Education

Distance education has been taken to be synonymous with distance learning, and is also referred to as open learning (Paul, 1990). Recently distance education has become popular for secondary and post-secondary education, industrial, commercial and professional training throughout the world. Rumble and Harry (1982) explained that while the concept of distance teaching universities stems from the 19th century it is only since the 1970s that the idea gained widespread interest due to the support found with the growth of the communication technologies available to the student.

Distance education generally refers to education from formal institutions where instruction is mediated whether through print, audio, video or computer communications technologies and instructor and learner are separated by space and time for most of the instruction. While the history of distance education can be divided into different periods depending on the capabilities of the communication technologies, today distance education encompasses a wide variety of situations and technologies depending on learning models, available technologies, cost factors, student access, size and sustainability.

Two concepts are seen as equally important defining characteristics of quality distance education: learner autonomy or flexibility, and interaction (Moore 1983, p. 157; Keegan, 1986, p. 49). Autonomy refers to the extent to which learners have options to study at a place and time of their choosing, while interaction requires that learners have opportunities to discuss with and learn from the instructor and other learners. Different models of distance education provide varying opportunities for autonomy and interaction.

Paul (1990) concluded that open learning is a recent manifestation of the general change towards the 20th Century democratization of education. He explained that institutions (particularly those universities labeled "open"), are dedicated to helping individuals overcome barriers to further education by providing open admission to adult students through flexible policies and a variety of instructional alternatives (p. 42).

Paul (1990) also noted that open universities vary widely in their form and structure, thus presenting ambiguities in terms of one standard definition of open learning institutions. Further some open universities are more open than others. However, he observed, they share the belief that most adults regardless of age, gender, economic

status, geographic location, employment status, and previous educational experience, given the opportunity and support can achieve university education; that structures, processes and services should be designed to assist students in overcoming the various barriers to university access and support; and that the institution is committed to some flexibility that can ease access and success for its students (p. 42). He noted that open universities often used distance learning as an instructional alternative which helped them meet their goals so that the definition and the meaning of "open learning" would include the following as major characteristics: (a) while there is no completely open learning system, the extent of "openness" to which a distance teaching institution is committed can be determined based on its accessibility, flexibility, and student control over learning outcomes; (b) distance education is a means of opening up educational opportunities to students who might not otherwise access them and succeed; (c) distance education is a means to open learning that removes the barriers that prevent the student from accessing, learning and succeeding in education; (d) none of the known open institutions is "ideal" in the sense of an open learning environment, but that each institution is a compromise in one way or another, some by intention, and most of them by conservatism and bureaucratization of functions that are found in all universities; and (e) open learning institutions have been supported worldwide and have opened up more doors and given more confidence to more people who would never otherwise have pursued formal, particularly university education (p. 45).

Distance Education in Tanzania

Tanzania has a long history of distance education dating back to the pre-colonial governments, first under the German colonists, then under British trusteeship (Zindi & Aucoin, 1995). Tanzania was initially known as Tanganyika before its independence in 1961 and before formation of the union with the Island of Zanzibar in 1964 (Zindi & Aucoin, 1995, pp. 31-32). It is located in Africa south of the Sahara, in the region of East Africa (Appendix 1). There were three separate systems of education in Tanzania based on race and the education system favored whites especially when calculated as grant share per child. In order to fulfill the educational aspirations of its mainly rural population the newly established government adopted at different periods policies of free

universal education for both primary and secondary school education (Zindi & Aucoin, 1995, p. 31; Nyerere, 1968, p. 49). World Bank reports (1988) showed that Tanzania had the lowest gross educational enrollment rates in the world in the 1960s, but by 1985 the country had more than doubled its gross enrollment rates for primary and secondary school education (p. 12), and became one of the top two countries [the other being Zimbabwe] south of the Sahara.

By the 1980s, Tanzania's educational policies (including education for all through universal primary education, expansion on adult literacy classes and distance education), became a model for other sub-Saharan African countries and attracted much external support (Zindi & Aucoin, 1995, p. 31). The World Bank (1988) reported that in sub-Saharan Africa, Tanzania had the most successful educational innovations including in-service teacher-training, distance education programs, policies on increased community involvement in the building and management of schools and the development of 'education with production' programs. UNICEF (1989, p. 94) records also showed that by 1980 Tanzania had almost achieved universal primary education under its defined target, and that the country had the highest rate of adult literacy of any African country south of the Sahara. In the 1990s the combination of a rapid drop in GNP, high inflation, and a rising national debt forced the government to reduce further expenditure on primary schooling, and put more emphasis on distance education (Zindi & Aucoin, 1995). However, this emphasis did not result in substantial funding. Dahwa (1993) reported that the Tanzanian budget for distance education amounted only to about 10 % of the total National Education budget in the Ministry of Education which was 20 % of the national GNP. This put a limitation on provision of adequate study materials, trained staff, and the running of workshops or group programs.

The Private Colleges

Wakatama (1983) has described how distance education was established in Tanzania during the colonial governments by voluntary organizations to provide for the formal educational desires of the Africans, who were denied formal education which the European and Asian children in Tanzania received (Nyerere, 1968). He said that, during the colonial period, secondary school education opportunities were severely limited

particularly for the African people except for those few who scored A's in English and Arithmetic. As such, many Africans in the 1950s and 1960s sought alternative education opportunities which meant studying through distance education from private correspondence colleges. The colonial government provided the colleges with little support. For instance, the college programs were not provided with buildings, textbooks or financial support from the colonial governments (Zindi & Aucoin, 1995, p. 32). Ntirukigwa (1986) and Wedemeyer (1966) reported that the distance education institutions that operated then included: the Central African Correspondence College, which had been established in South Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe) in 1954; and in 1962, the Rapid Results College which was established in both Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Other private colonial distance institutions that operated across African countries included Transworld Tutorial College, International Correspondence Schools, Wolsey Hall, and The British Tutorial College. These institutions were mainly interested in obtaining fees, payable in foreign currency only, from Africans in search of further education.

Tanzanians demanded and struggled for their right to greater access to formal education long before they had obtained their political independence, first, before the First World War, when the country was under German rule, and again after the First World War when the country was a British protectorate (Zindi & Aucoin, 1995, p. 33; Nyerere, 1968, p. 49). The private foreign-owned distance education institutions (Ntirukigwa, 1986) that existed in Tanzania before independence and in Africa as a whole, offered various forms of distance education to both the native Tanzanians and expatriates mostly in correspondence form. The programs did not include face-to-face-contacts with tutors or mentors to students. After independence in 1961, Tanzanians' need for formal education became more pressing and multi-purpose (Zindi & Aucoin, 1995, p. 33; Nyerere, 1968, p. 49), for the new government found that the education it inherited was inappropriate and the majority of its people were uneducated and lacked skills needed to provide the leadership to carry out the development plans of the new government. The population was also growing fast, with a very low income of less than US $ 100 per capita. This situation necessitated the new government to immediately embark on expansion of the education system at all levels, primary, secondary, and tertiary at the same time.

John (1991) explained that the Tanzanian government introduced distance education programs in order to provide mass education on a wider scale and to provide professional training for nationalists, who were already in such posts as teachers and cooperative or development workers. He said that like many other African countries, distance education in Tanzania followed four different stages: (a) correspondence institutes; (b) radio programs which were used to improve residential instruction; (c) radio and visual campaigns to promote literacy, health, and other issues of national importance; and (d) formal distance education and training institutions. In Tanzania, the development of distance education followed such a path from the private correspondence schools of the 1960s to the proposal for the establishment of a full scale Open University of Tanzania, which was implemented in March 1993.

The Institute of Adult Education and the National Correspondence Institute

Distance education in Tanzania emerged in 1967 (Zindi & Aucoin, 1995, p. 33), with the development of two institutes, the Institute for Adult Education (IAE) which was established during the days of the University College of Dar-Es-Salaam and the National Correspondence Institute (NCI) which was established after the University of Dar-Es-Salaam was born. The IAE provided adult literacy through radio programs, evening classes for adults working during the day and distance-learning modules which were posted to students. The NCI also used correspondence modules but had no provision for face-to-face contact between the tutors and students. Both institutes were based at the University of Dar-Es-Salaam, and the NCI was funded by the Tanzanian government and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), while the IAE was supported through various sources of funding.

Young (1980) explained that the objectives for establishing the IAE and NCI in Tanzania were to produce correspondence courses to serve needs such as courses at the primary educational level in important subjects, courses in academic subjects for secondary schools, subjects for adults, and professional courses; and to provide radio broadcasts as well as face-to-face meetings between students and tutors in and outside the Dar-Es-Salaam region. By 1989 the NCI had enrolled about 80,000 students in 23 courses including A-levels, professional training and university studies (Doerfert, 1989).

Zindi and Aucoin (1995, pp. 33-34) commented that the NCI developed study materials using subject panels of specialists and editors but without distance education specialists or instructional designers. While students were not provided with study centres, NCI provided student support in various ways. These included tutors marking and commenting on students' assignments, answering students' written questions or requests, and through tutors' occasional contacts with students either at their residences, offices or at the distance institution offices, depending on who initiated the need for contact. Also, most student queries were solved through writing or telephoning. The NCI continues to use printed materials and radio programs, and in 1991, the NCI was recognized for having trained over 35,000 teachers through their program. The NCI has also introduced other programs, including vocational and technical courses in carpentry, masonry, plumbing, tailoring, motor mechanics, electronics and radio technology, and it continues to provide more opportunities for student interaction (John, 1991).

In 1984, the Tanzanian government, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Head of State, and initially funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) through a Fellowships and Training Program, established in Dar-Es-Salaam a distant education institution called the South African Extension Unit (SAEU) to provide distance education for South African people in exile in African countries south of the Sahara (Zindi and Aucoin 1995, p. 34). By April 1994, the SAEU was running two distance education programs for South African students based in Uganda, Botswana, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania itself. The institution had an open admission policy with gradual hierarchical progression. Students were provided with correspondence texts for basic course study supplemented with radio-cassette materials and face-to-face tutorials. SAEU prepared the basic foundation study materials, while the foreign institutions of British Open Learning in Britain, Wolsey Hall and the Metropolitan College provided most of the study materials. When South Africa attained its independence in April 1994, the students returned home, abandoning their programs. SAEU is still in Dar-Es-Salaam, but its management has been transferred to South Africa itself to manage the former activities for African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC) refugees who have returned home.

The Development of the OUT

In 1979 (OUT, 1993b, p. 1), the government commissioned the Anglo-Tanzania Media Study group to look into the possibility of establishing an open university in Tanzania. In 1982, the Presidential Commission on Education (PCE) recommended the establishment of external degree programs at the conventional University of Dar-Es-Salaam. In 1988, the idea of an open university was again explored by yet another Presidential committee. In December 1989, the Commonwealth of Learning published a proposal for an open university to be based in Dar-Es-Salaam entitled "The Role of Media Technology within the Proposed Open University of Tanzania (Cutting, 1989, p. 9; Zindi and Aucoin, 1995, p. 34). In the proposal, Cutting had called for the Posts and Telecommunications Cooperation (PTC) to improve delivery and to install better telephone lines in preparation for teleconferencing and computer technologies in a proposed Open University of Tanzania. These recommendations were contained in the 1990 March Presidential Committee on Education Report. The Cabinet Paper in 1991 drew recommendations from the Presidential Education Committee of 1990, and then became a Bill that was presented in the parliament in December, 1992. The OUT was thereafter established by Act of Parliament No. 7 on 4th December, 1992. The Act became operational on 1st March, 1993, and the University was inaugurated in January, 1994, when the First Chancellor was officially installed with due ceremony (OUT, 1993b, pp. Vi, 1-5; OUT, 1996b, p. 1; Appendix 2).

The Open University of Tanzania

The Open University of Tanzania was the first distance teaching institution of post-secondary education in Tanzania offering degree courses through distance learning systems. In order for the OUT to start its activities, the 1990 Presidential Committee had recommended that Tanzania initiate an open university by adopting and adapting study materials produced by an existing institution of higher learning. The Committee had also recommended that the OUT acquire the offices at the National Correspondence Institute (NCI). Hence the OUT initiated its first programs in 1994 using study materials purchased from Nairobi University, whose Faculty of External Studies at the College of Education and External Studies had already developed materials in ten disciplines. The OUT did not acquire the National Correspondence Institute offices and instead found new

offices at the premises of the Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organization (TIRDO) in Dar-Es-Salaam.

Objectives

The justification for the establishment of an open university in Tanzania was based on the importance of filling the gap left by the conventional universities in the country (Tanzania Ministry of Education, 1990). This justification links well with the aims and the objectives of programs established by The Open University of Tanzania (OUT, 1993b, p. 3). The major aims of the university are to make university education accessible to a much wider public than is possible through regular face-to-face teaching methods; to address some of the most urgent national development bottlenecks and manpower requirements; and to research in and experiment with new ways of learning and new approaches to education. The general objective has been to provide opportunities for Tanzanians to attain university education while continuing with the tasks of nation building and carrying out of their family responsibilities. The specific objectives have been to provide opportunities for those aspiring Tanzanians who cannot be given places in the existing faculties of the conventional National Universities, to provide an alternative innovative method of learning which is not limited in time and space, to provide opportunities for people to learn at their own pace as opposed to the conventional way that ignores the facts known about individual differences, to provide the much-needed better-educated workforce, and to maximize the use of the nation's limited educational human resources by providing opportunities where their knowledge can be shared with wider audiences beyond the lecture halls.

University Faculty

The University uses a small core staff and a large number of part-time staff from the conventional universities, the National Correspondence Institute and other higher learning institutions.

The role of tutors (part time) and counselors are closely linked to achieving the aims and the objectives of the University. The tutors and the counselors are part-time workers who help to make the university education available to a much wide public in the

country. Their duties are similar to those of the permanent staff and this strengthens their own professional capability.

Student Population

Most applicants to distance education programs are A-level graduates who are qualified to enter the conventional university but are unable to do so due to limited space. Another group is that of civil servants who are teachers or are in commerce-related vocations. A third group is that of graduates of different fields, some of whom hold a Ph.D.in their respective specialization, but are interested in taking a basic degree such as in law. The fourth group is that of non-degree holders who have certificates in law but would like to upgrade them to a degree level (OUT, 1993b, p. 5). A survey carried out on the 1994 OUT intake shows that 60.9% of the students had diplomas or other certificates.

Programs Offered

In 1994 the university started with two faculties: Education and Arts, and Social Sciences. The programs offered were Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts with Education, Bachelor of Commerce, and Bachelor of Commerce with Education. Since then, the University has expanded programs on an annual basis. In 1995, the University introduced Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science with Education, and Law degrees (OUT, 1993b, p. 4). The programs are planned to take six to eight years. Each course is a year long with continuous assessments (two assignments and two timed tests) and annual examinations. Programs are individualized and students are allowed to take examinations on any units completed by giving a notification to the appropriate officer in the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic (OUT, 1993b, p. 2).

The OUT Systems Model

The OUT adopted a systems model of distance education as described by Kaye and Rumble (1981, p.19-22), following concepts developed by Miller and Rice (1967). The OUT provides distance teaching and learning by developing study material and distributing them to students by directly posting or sending them through the regional centres. The educational process uses a combination of systematically organized student

study material kits, selected texts, audio-cassette or radio programs, and occasional face-to-face contact with tutors (OUT, 1995, p. 9; Rumble, 1986. pp. 15-17). Within the distance education system, the teaching and learning activities are organized into three categories: materials development, learner support services, and operational activities.

Materials Development: Print is the main medium of instruction (OUT, 1993b p. 2). The study materials which are developed in units of 35 lecture hours, are self contained and highly interactive. They are presented in book form referred to as study units. These units are written by specialized university lecturers, professionals in higher learning institutions and subject tutors at the OUT, who also recommend further readings. The recommended references may be sent directly to students or placed in bookshops, and in public and OUT regional libraries. The written study units are carefully reviewed at the OUT by specialized distance teaching experts who are responsible for the OUT curriculum planning, study materials development, teaching content techniques, instructional designing, media production, and editorial and graphic designing. They prototype the materials, supervise processing into finished products of printed, audiovisual or radio program study materials, and oversee packing and sending them to core tutors, regional directors and students for use. The distance teaching experts make sure that the materials they finally produce for student use meet the study needs of distant learners. The content of the units contains the basic information required by the student. The materials are organized systematically, presenting the objectives of the study, the introduction, and then the lecture. Depending on the nature of the subject some study units are accompanied by study guides. Each lecture is followed by some activities in the form of a question or a problem to solve to help students test their understanding. Finally, students are advised to discuss their responses with a colleague or a field tutor in their local study centre, and where the need arises, students can solicit further help from their regional director or by writing to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic at the OUT Central Office. Two assignments or more (depending on the nature of the subject) are required for submission for continuous assessment (OUT, 1995, p. 10).

Learner Support Services: These fall into several categories: Regional Resource centre, study centres, study supervision, supplementary reading materials, library services, audio-materials, and information-sharing. Specifically, students are provided

with optional regional residential face-to-face-sessions twice a year just before the timed test sessions and the annual examination. Further to this, the regional resource centres provide supportive tutoring and counseling services; discussion groups, workshops, seminars, and occasionally public lectures; teaching and learning facilities; and organize training for part-time tutors. In the rural regional centres in reality there is little tutoring because of the difficulty of providing tutors. They also coordinate and disseminate OUT information and activities with the local study centres and the central office in Dar-Es-Salaam. In addition, the study centres also provide tutoring and counseling services, physical facilities such as classrooms and laboratories, and libraries serving inter-student book exchanges. Study supervision takes place in the study centres from time to time as arranged by the students and the field tutors recruited from the local secondary schools or teacher colleges who are specialists in the subject. They offer tutoring and counseling services. The regional directors help students identify and select their field tutors. Although the postal service is available in all regional towns, they have not been very reliable.

Supplementary readings are normally listed in the study units and are made available along with the study units or placed in bookshops, public and OUT regional and study centre libraries. Further readings such as up-to-date journal articles are brought to the attention of the student and placed in the libraries, or under very special cases, the subject tutors photocopy the articles and send them directly to students as necessary. Audiocassettes supporting the printed materials or providing explanations, instructions to practical work, or feedback are also being prepared for certain subjects. Library facilities from Tanzania Library services which are available in most regions in Tanzania (OUT, 1996b, p. 79-81), and the British Council library based in Dar-Es-Salaam are brought to the attention of the students at the orientation session, and lists of references available in the library are provided to the students. However, the OUT strongly encourages students to buy basic references in their area of study.

For information services, the OUT uses Newsletters to provide an opportunity for students to share experiences with their colleagues and the university community. Students as well as the OUT community are expected to contribute to this Newsletter. The National Radio and government English and Kiswahili newspapers are used to

announce important and emergency information to students. Also, the OUT uses circular letters to inform students, and encourages students to write letters to OUT staff and colleagues to share information and make their queries.

Operational activities. These are divided into two categories: (a) Faculty activities which involve the development, production, and distribution of study materials and teaching which is already explained above under *Material Development*; and (b) Student activities which involve student admission and allocation of course and study materials; learning, assessment and certification (Appendix 3).

The OUT recruits students on an annual basis by announcing in the University Almanac, the National Radio and government English and Kiswahili newspapers the admission application period from April to August each year. Students are required to send in letters and a fee of 3,500 Tanzanian shillings when requesting application forms (OUT, 1998b). The OUT sends to each applicant the application form and three basic information documents, General Information Intake, a Student Handbook and the Prospectus, to inform and familiarize the applicants with OUT available programs and application requirements, the organizational structure of the OUT and study procedures, prospects and problems. Using the application forms, applicants are expected to send their applications for specific programs to their chosen Faculty. Students for the degree program are chosen on the basis of their age and academic qualification. Faculties at the OUT recruit qualifying students and inform successful candidates through letters written directly to them, and by publishing their names in the government English and Kiswahili newspapers. The successful students are at the same time informed of the joining instruction in their letters and newspapers announcements.

In January each year an orientation session for the new students is carried out in each regional centre by the core tutor staff at the OUT, assisted by the regional directors in their regions and part-time tutors hired from the NCI and University of Dar-Es-Salaam. At this time, the students register and pay their initial fees (caution money and tuition fee of 40,000 Tanzanian shillings), and are provided with identity cards and core study material kits sufficient for one academic year. Students who cannot pay the initial payment are allowed to register but are not provided with the study kits. They get the study kit posted to them or from their regional directors when they pay the initial fees.

During the orientation, students are introduced to how to use the study materials, how the OUT operates, and are introduced to their regional director. Students are also encouraged to attend face-to-face-sessions in their respective regional centres, but are informed that the OUT is flexible that a student may use any regional centre in the country any time to carry out any OUT activity such as their timed tests or annual exam, or to obtain counseling and field-tutor support. They are also informed that a student may inform the Central office three months in advance if they wish to do their timed tests and annual exam outside the country. A student can also suspend studies for a particular period of time by writing to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic to help the OUT office keep track of the student's progress.

Successful continuing students have their names published in the government newspaper in early December and receive a letter from OUT. Their registration for the next year is from mid-December to February. Students who do not pass all their subjects at the end of the year exams may re-sit the exam in the month of May of the following year, while timed tests are re-sat in the next following timed test or annual exam session.

Examinations at the OUT consist of continuous assessment comprising at least two written assignments depending on the nature of the subject, two timed tests, demonstrations/practical, projects (depending on the nature of the subject); and a written examination at the end of each part based on percentage grades. Continuous assessment of the written assignments account for 40%, of which 25% of the total grade is obtained from the two timed (supervised) tests and 15% of the total grade is from home assignments that students send by post or in person to the respective Faculty core tutors for marking. The end of the year exam accounts for 60% of the total student grade. The pass mark for each paper is 40 percent. All written assignments, tests and exams are prepared and administered by the core OUT tutors with assistance, where necessary, of lecturers from the University of Dar-Es-Salaam. In order for a student to qualify for a degree in Arts or Science the student must sit and pass papers in a total of 36 units and their respective practicals such as Science Practicals, while those in education must sit and pass papers in a total of 39 units and the Teaching Practicum in a period of six to eight years. The classification of the final award is 70% or above (First class honors), 60 to 69% (Second class upper/Upper division), 50 to 59% (Second class lower/Lower

division), and 40 to 49% (Pass). Students are required to notify in writing the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic three months in advance if they want to sit for their annual exam and specify the units that they want to sit for. This helps the office keep track of student assessment and retention, and of continuing students, dormant students and those who dropout.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The President of Tanzania, His Excellency Benjamin Mkapa, giving an opening speech on the occasion of the inauguration of additional working space for the OUT at the Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organization's (TIRDO) premises stressed the OUT's special mission of promoting the education of the women in the country (Mkapa, 1996). He reiterated the fact that for many women, distance education was their only hope for attaining higher education. As such, he urged the OUT to make extra efforts to ensure that women availed themselves of this alternative path towards investing in their (own) intellectual development.

The OUT (1993b) has identified the advantages of providing higher education through distance education to be: greater flexibility in disseminating programs than with conventional education; optimum use of the available educational technology; prospects for introducing a systematic strategy of apprenticeship in accordance with the most modern principles of psychology and being more economical than the conventional system (pp. 6-7).

It has also been suggested that African countries should opt for distance education as an alternative since conventional education cannot meet the needs of the public demand for education (Ansere, 1992). Distance education brought into higher education new groups of people who had been neglected in the past. People who live in rural areas now have the opportunity to study at home for university degrees, while women, who for a long time have been under-represented, are now rapidly gaining equality in secondary and post-secondary education. Ansere's desire (as well as that of the country's president) has not yet been realized since the percentage of women students in post-secondary education in Tanzania as well as in some other African universities remains low (Malekela, 2000). Reasons for this have been attributed to the private

sector of family life (marriage, childbirth and rearing responsibilities), the multiple roles of women expected by society, schooling, and the streamlining of educational opportunities. Mbuguni (1994) explained the condition of Tanzanian women as being generally poor, lacking assets or security, isolated and deprived from mixing in public. However, she argued that if Tanzanian women were provided with higher education, it would help them to elevate their status in the society. von Prümmer (1990) noted that women studying in distance higher learning institutions do not require extended periods of time outside their homes. She said that distance education is flexible with regard to time and schedule, and that it provides ample time for most housewives and mothers to participate in academic education in addition to fulfilling their other diverse societal roles. It is hoped that the inclusion of non-student participants in the study interviews and visits to rural sites in Tanzania will help me identify why women have not chosen to enroll with the OUT and encourage them to participate in "sustainable" development [including higher education] as advocated by Dei (1993) and Matowanyika (1989).

SUMMARY

Distance education is expanding worldwide and for all levels. Therefore women, who are normally the first teachers of children, need higher education to be better able to assist their children at home and in society. Unlike conventional education, distance education for women has the advantage being flexible and allowing them to take different programs of their choice (von Prümmer, 1988). It also allows women to engage in income generation activities while they attend school. Distance education is therefore an ideal type of education for most developing countries where resources are very limited, and even more so for women who are far fewer in any developing country's work force. It is for these reasons that this research intends to gain insight into the problems of women's under-representation in higher education and to come up with suggestions on how the Open University of Tanzania can offset the existing under-representation so as to help women excel in higher education through distance education, get a better understanding of their environment so as to manage it for real development for themselves and that of the society at large, elevate their status in society, and contribute more positively towards their development and that of the entire society.

Chapter 2

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIAN CULTURE AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

Tanzania's First President Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere cited in Young and Perraton (1980) urged Tanzanians to invest in education for it has the power to liberate people. He said:

> Man can only liberate himself or develop himself. He cannot be liberated or developed by another. For man makes himself. It is his ability to act deliberately for a self-determined purpose, which distinguishes him from the other animals. The expansion of his own consciousness, and therefore of his power over himself, his environment, and his society, must therefore ultimately be what we mean by development. (p. 1)

Agreeing with President Nyerere's views, Young and Perraton (1980, p.1) noted that education increases people's physical and mental freedom and their control over themselves, their own lives, and the environment in which they live. However, such freedom and control is difficult to obtain if the culture does not support their desires. For example, these choices are not available to women unless society as a whole and the communities in which the women live are willing to accept the changes that women wish for. Such changes would allow women to participate more equitably in the development issues that hold importance in their own lives. The impact of gender and culture is observed in textbooks, social practices and in the pressure to maintain traditional roles. For women in particular these issues are difficult to resolve without the support of their society.

SOCIO-CULTURAL ISSUES FOR WOMEN

Synders and Tadesse (1995) talked of gender as a social construct that asserts the expectations and responsibilities of men and women beyond just biological difference, while Mbughuni (1994) explained gender as being based on society's conviction and belief that males and females have specific roles in their society, and that the roles unfold into the masculine and feminine responsibilities, behavior, values and cultures.

On the basis of culture, Tanzania has more than 120 officially known tribes located in its 20 regions of mainland Tanzania (Arusha, Coast, Dar-Es-Salaam, Dodoma, Iringa, Kigoma, Kagera, Kilimanjaro, Lindi, Mbeya, Morogoro, Mara, Mtwara, Mwanza, Rukwa, Ruvuma, Shinyanga, Singida, Tabora, Tanga), and five regions on the island of Zanzibar (Mjini-Mgharibi, Unguja, Kusini Unguja, Kaskazini Unguja, Kaskazini Pemba). Each tribe speaks a different local dialect, has a distinctive culture, and is made up of a number of extended family units called clans. Tanzania is also culturally divided into three main social groups of patrilineal, matrilineal, and "neutral sex-bias" tribes. In patrilineal groups, the head of the family normally falls to the first-born son in each family unit. In matrilineal groups, the wife's brother (the children's uncle) assumes responsibility for the care of the family, whereas in the neutral sex-bias groups, the wife's uncle (known as the grandpa-uncle of the children) assumes the rite of succession. In the patrilineal groups, all property is owned by the clan, and is entrusted to the male members, and the first born in each family is usually in charge of all property in the family unit. In the matrilineal and neutral sex-bias groups, usually all members of the family unit share the family property. However, because most of these groups are migratory, they usually do not have permanent ownership of land or houses. The diversity of the cultural groups and their rules about succession, and hence land holdings and responsibility for children, has a strong influence on the expected social roles for women and men in Tanzania.

Although an extensive part of southern Tanzania is mainly matrilineal, the dominant social group in the country is patrilineal. Politically, Tanzanian people do not have tribal conflicts, but culturally Tanzanians are strongly grounded in their tribal cultures, especially on the basis of sex-roles, ownership of property, and on different aspects of life values including what counts as necessary to be accepted as a normal human being in the tribe. For example, some tribes strongly believe that it is not important in life to build a permanent house because people themselves are not, after all permanent.

Brock-Utne and Katunzi (1990) cited several research reports dealing with women's equity, education and culture in Tanzania. In a research study on "The sex-role stereotypes in textbooks for girls in Tanzania", Kalugula (1990) reported that children in

Tanzania were still taught informal skills in their families according to sex (p. 25). Girls were taught feminine roles such as how to cook, fetch firewood, clean the house, and wash clothes; while boys were taught masculine roles such as how to thatch houses and cut poles for construction of the houses from forests.

Kalugula (1990) also noted that there has been little research in Tanzania on the way women and men are portrayed in textbooks. Of 23 textbooks written by the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) which was earlier known as Institute of Education (IE) or Institute for Curriculum Development (ICD) in Kiswahili Taasisis ya Ukuzaji Mitaala (TUMI), men are pictured twice as often (161 times) in the textbooks as women (82 times); the textbooks pictured men almost as often in leisure activities and caring for themselves as when serving others, while women are pictured three times as often serving others as caring for themselves or in leisure activities. The most submissive behavior shown in the pictures in the textbooks was of a girl kneeling down before elders, while the only winner receiving a reward showed a boy receiving a winner's shield; the only people pictured in leadership and white-collar jobs are men, who were depicted as explorers, land-lords, chiefs, doctor, and dentists. Kalugula further found that policy documents, syllabi and course programs were the foundational documents for textbooks written for teaching in Tanzanian schools. He therefore suggested that these be analyzed as to their gender bias.

Last but not the least, he noted that after political independence, the colonial legacy of sex specificity in some courses in the schools was maintained. Girls were still denied access to technical education and had exclusive access to domestic science education (Tanzania Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 50). Katabaro (1990) who investigated "The effect of curricular options on future career choices of girls" (p. 12), reported that diversification of secondary school education re-enforced the colonial categories of education such as the study of home economics was limited to girls only, something she found hindered efforts to bring equality in education for boys and girls. She found that most rural girls in Tanzania began primary education at about ten years and completed primary education at fifteen to seventeen, the age when they are expected by society to be married or get engaged to their life partners (p.12). She noted too that, despite several research studies addressing the question of school girl pregnancies, quite a high number

of girls get expelled from school each year, and that the 1987/88 Ministry of Education record showed that 17 regions of the Tanzanian mainland reported pregnancies as a major cause of expulsion of girls from school systems in primary school education.

Mbilinyi, Mbughuni, Meena, and Olekambaine (1990) carried out "an historical perspective on research on women and education in Tanzania: A review of documents and research in the educational sector with reference to women" (p.1). In this study they found that Tanzanian women are exposed to authoritative styles of disciplining, especially in the patrilineal societies where unquestioned obedience and passive submissiveness are practiced. They reported that constraints holding women back in education are in three categories: gender division of labor in production and reproduction; unequal allocation and control of resources at all levels from household to national to global society; and the male patriarchal order which reinforces women's subordination in society within all classes and ethnic groups though with different dynamics in each case.

They also noted that after independence educational reforms did not consider gender equity. Girls performed less well than boys due to labor at home, a punitive school environment, and girl's lack of self-esteem in education. As well, cultural views supported male supremacy and there were differential expectations for those seeking post-primary education and those seeking employment. Most critical of all, they said, was that there were fewer boarding schools for girls where they could normally perform better, while, when girls were send to co-educational schools, girls' progress was affected by too much attention from older boys including the male teachers and sometimes resulted in the girls getting pregnant and being expelled from school.

They explained that lack of gender studies in the school curriculum meant that boys and girls lacked understanding of gender differences, and the impact of gender on their lives. They observed also that the disciplining with a cane practiced in schools strengthens the unquestioning and submissive discipline practiced by patrilineal society homes and these, together, discouraged girls and women's initiatives in classroom activities and their own self-evaluation and self-esteem. They noted too that women consistently have less access to post-secondary education especially if they come from poor families, and there are fewer women teachers in post-secondary education as one goes higher in the levels of education. Women also have lower participation rates in on-

the-job training as well, and are less often promoted into administrative positions. Women are limited to accessing these positions due to their multiple roles of housewife and manager of economic projects in the families which are added to their paid jobs.

They also reported that the curriculum at the secondary school streamed girls into domestic science studies which was a "dead-end" because the girls doing domestic science did not take science subjects or the girls' schools did not teach science and so they lacked the requirements necessary to proceed with further education. They observed that many books used in the schools project negative images of women and are misogynous, while vocational training and technical education promote "soft" trades such as tailoring and sign-writing trades for women. Eshwan (1982), cited in Matiru and Gachuhi (1988, pp.137-138) noted that women are under-represented in science-based university studies. He argued that if women are to make their contribution to the development of African society they must participate in the more challenging and better paid careers as men do. But the reasons women do not participate in these careers is more complex than Eshwan portrays.

Mushi and Puja (1990) captured the situation better when they reported that present Tanzanians are torn between what is "traditional" and what is "modern". They suggested that there is need to devise ways and means to resolve these conflicts. Kassimoto (1990), explaining the traditional rites, said that these are used to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood, where girls are betrothed soon after puberty and clans arrange for spouses (p. 15). She reported that these rites have been, and are being discouraged by Tanzania's modern education system. Mbughuni and Chilla (1990, pp. 21-22) found that many of the expectations of the tribal societies are still based on the belief that the woman's first responsibilities in her society are to marriage and family raising. This, in terms of modern education development, leads many women to end up choosing careers such as teaching and nursing that are more or less compatible with their household responsibilities so that they do not jeopardize their positions as wives and mothers for in these tribes the responsibility for raising the family is the woman's alone. Katabaro noted that most Tanzanian parents' traditional beliefs are that educating girls is transferring wealth from one's own family to the other family; that girls, particularly those attending day schools are expected to engage in several social roles at their homes

as well as do their school studies whereas boys performed only specific duties or were left out to play; and that the Ministry of Education's Annual Report had put the figure for girls in public and private schools at 34.9 % and 42.4 % respectively of the total number of students attending the schools.

Matiru and Gachuhi (1988, pp. 137-151) concluded that there has always been disparity between the sexes with regard to access, dropout and achievement in education in developing countries. This they alleged is due to a number of factors some of which are school-related, such as the curriculum, the design and provision of instructional materials, and teaching methods, and some are gender-related in that the terminology used in many school books is not gender-neutral.

Brock-Utne and Possi (1990) and Cooksey et al. (1993) argued that increasing educational services in Tanzania to ensure sufficient accessibility necessitates also creating conditions for reducing gender disparity in education so as to make the services effective. They pointed out that the nature of the services and how responsive the services are to the expectations and demands of parents and communities will determine the increase in girls' participation and help narrow the gender gap.

The Tanzanian Association for Development of Research in Education for Girls (TADREG) (1990) argued that gender disparity in educational performance and achievement must involve analysis of immediate factors in the home environment and basic factors imbedded in the overall socio-cultural and economic environment. TADREG further argued that while the economy may determine the quantity and quality of the educational services provided, non-economic factors may determine the demand and therefore effective use of the services. This means that participation or non-participation of girls and boys in education and the level to which they will be pushed to achieve will be determined greatly by life opportunities in their societies, and the gender-related expectations the parents and communities will have for boys and girls. This is especially true when the resources are scarce and parents have to choose the level of education and number of children in school they can afford.

In Tanzania, while policy for public elementary schooling is free, uniform and cost sharing contribution for the primary schools and the fees required for secondary and post-secondary school education limit most rural parents from sending their daughters to

complete primary school education or post-primary education. This is true particularly when the resources are scarce and parents have to choose between educating some children and leaving others when considering the primary school uniform and cost sharing costs and secondary and post-secondary education. Usually girls more often than boys fall victim of this circumstance when parents have also to consider other limiting factors for the girl's education such as helping with younger siblings, pregnancies while at school, prospects for good jobs, marriage where the girl moves to the husband's family, which is considered by traditions to benefit the husband's family, and girls becoming mothers and not being able to move quickly to well paying jobs and managerial positions. However, the Tanzanian government, in order to ensure that girls are encouraged to participate more fully in secondary education has required that of those who apply, girls get selected for a secondary school position to continue with their public secondary education on a ratio of three girls to every one boy selected. Recently the University of Dar-Es-Salaam has required that all females who qualify to continue with university education be accepted and girls who fall below the cut-off point by one or two notches be admitted and be given a one month crush program training whereby at the end of the one month those who pass the provided test get selected to continue with the university education. In the same vein, in 1985, the University of Dar-Es-Salaam withheld all male applicants' entry to university education for two years while females continued straight into university education in an attempt to narrow the big gap existing between the male and female applicants (ref. Musoma Resolution). This practice has not been repeated. The efforts by the Tanzanian government to encourage women to enter secondary education has led to a greater percentage of female students who are eligible to enter post-secondary education to get the chance to participate. It is in this same spirit to encourage more girls to participate in higher education that the Tanzanian government initiated, in 1994, the Open University of Tanzania and provided with it lower entry qualifications, affordable tuition fees, and the opportunity for students to study at their own time and place.

WOMEN STUDENTS' ISSUES CONCERNING DISTANCE EDUCATION

Kinyanjui (1995) examined current practices, issues and developments in the application of distance education and associated communication technologies to improve quality in education and training in Africa (p. 118). He explained that after independence in the 1960s, most African countries had a high demand for education. Rapid population growth and increased access to secondary education along with high education demand made governments liberalize admission enrollment at universities and tertiary institutions. This liberalization ceased abruptly in the 1990s with the economic and structural adjustment programs, and with tight budgets forcing government cutbacks on support services such as libraries, equipment, and maintenance of laboratories and buildings. At the same time Africa was also hit severely by the brain drain of specialists and experts in many of the higher learning, training and service institutions and by the impact of AIDS related illness. The outcome of this meant that not only the physical structures of the universities deteriorated but also the quality of education started to decline while the university student population continued to accelerate (p. 118).

Kinyanjui (1995) advised that if Africa is to move forward from the educational turmoil being experienced in the 1990s, new strategies will need to be introduced and developed to buttress and extend the conventional education systems at national, regional and global levels, which by themselves are inadequate. His suggested strategies for implementation included elements of reprographic facilities, materials delivery systems, broadcasting, learner support services, as well as the application of newer communication technologies such as computers and satellites. He noted the encouraging developments made by some countries which had already managed to incorporate audiovisual media and newer technologies in the traditional print media with varying degrees of success; and that the success had been assisted by support provided by external agencies and organizations, especially in the training of local staff in the proper application of the new media and technologies and in the maintenance of equipment.

Among the new initiatives taken in the 1990s are those of two international organizations, UNESCO and COL, who have embarked on providing assistance in developing distance education systems and in facilitating cooperation of the activities.

UNESCO took a leading role in promoting distance education in Africa. In September, 1990, they organized a Regional seminar in Arusha, Tanzania. The seminar brought representatives from leading distance education institutions and was funded by the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other international organizations. Further to the Regional seminar, African institutions and organizations have expressed willingness to cooperate in distance education activities on regional or sub-regional levels as was expressed at the follow-up seminar held in Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania in November, 1994. From these seminars, agreement was reached to develop a Regional Program for the Development of Distance Education in Africa (RPDDEA). The RPDDEA objective is to assist African States to strengthen their national capacities in order to set up and efficiently run distance education systems (a concern to make optimal use of human, material and institutional resources available in the region, by setting up a mechanism of cooperation). The common consent of the master plan action of the RPDDEA facilitates the implementation of the separate activities, while at the same time, avoiding duplication of various multilateral and bilateral inputs, and encourages synergy of national efforts (Kinyanjui, 1995, p. 119).

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) which was established in 1988 has already initiated and developed distance education projects in 17 Commonwealth countries in Africa. Recently UNESCO and COL have entered into a formal agreement to establish closer working relations on matters that attract mutual interests and common goals. Such was the commonly sponsored consultancy mission that finally produced the implementation plan for the Open University of Tanzania, and launched the first programs in January 1994 with the registration of 766 students in BA, BA (Education), B Comm., and B Comm. (Education) (Kinyanjui, 1995, p. 119). Along with this support, COL sponsored a series of training workshops in instructional design, course writing, editing, and tutoring to aid in the successful operation of the Open University of Tanzania.

Despite these opportunities, the diversity of Tanzanian socio-cultural groups with their varied rules about succession, land holdings and responsibility for children have a strong influence on the expected social roles for women and men. They pose a limiting influence on women being able to fully take advantage of distance education

opportunities due to factors some of which are school-related, such as the curriculum, and the design and provision of instructional materials; and some of which are gender-related such as the gender division of labor in production and reproduction in society and parents' traditional beliefs that educating girls is transferring wealth from one's own family to the other family. All these limitations are based on socio-cultural beliefs that women's participation in the society is naturally that of the multiple roles of wife, mother, housewife and manager of economic projects in the families in addition to their paid jobs. Hence, Tanzanians in general are torn between what is traditional and what is modern, and as such there is need to devise ways and means to resolve these conflicts so that women can be free to participate fully in Tanzanian society.

Muro (1988) in discussing education in Tanzania noted that the proportion of the students taking courses from the National Correspondence Institute (NCI) who were women students was much lower (only 16 percent) than the numbers involved in Universal Primary Education (50 percent) in Tanzania. She noted:

> One would expect women to take up the opportunity of studying through distance education because their opportunities at secondary level and in other formal institutions are fewer than those of men.
>
> There are several explanations for women's lower enrollment in distance education courses. One assumption is that the course offered may not meet the women's expectations and needs. Women have always tended to be attracted to courses/programs which cater for their immediate problems and needs. Time constraints may provide another explanation. Most women are so bogged down by farm work and routine household chores that they have no time and energy to be allocated to studies. (pp. 60-61)

von Prümmer (1988) also noted that women in developing countries are affected by barriers such as problems related to distance, time, inadequate support, unsatisfactory tutorials, lack of child care services and conducive study and learning space (p. 57). She attributed this to the economic conditions, the organizational conditions of the educational systems, and the traditional roles binding women to the roles of becoming wives, mothers raising children, and being home makers.

However, von Prümmer (1988) found that most women's programs in Germany also were characterized by large student dropouts; failure to graduate in the minimum or even the maximum time provided (6-8 years); intermittent student support services such

as face-to-face-sessions and a heavy dependence on residential components including privately arranged formal tuition. The high student dropout rate was problematic to both the universities and to the students. She said, as far as students were concerned, important issues were: (a) attrition rate and the problem of identifying factors which contribute to retention or dropout, (b) women, more than men, preferred to study in groups and to have contact with other students and with staff, (c) most married women were not employed, therefore did not have money to pay the fees, (d) delayed awareness and consideration of the time and work-load involved in doing the studies as opposed to the material gains, and (e) working mothers considered higher education not rewarding especially when they had to undertake double, triple, or even more roles at the same time (p. 57). von Prümmer's (1988) research also revealed that women were more affected by factors working against continuation. She noted that only very determined women were able to access, participate and successfully complete higher education studies through using distance methodologies. She suggested that in order to improve women's enrollment, effective participation and successful achievement, the barriers limiting capable determined women must be addressed.

Kamau (1995) discussing distance education programs in Kenya stated that "it is important in course design to listen to the needs of potential and actual learners (before course design and implementation) in order to assess the support services required" (p. 262). She explained that the learners' aspirations, experience, geographical environment, family commitments, social and economic background determine the quality of course design and support services needed by the learner.

Kamau (1995, pp. 262-263) suggested that according to Mutava (1991) the needs of distance learner support services were based on problems within the target group which were known to distance teaching institutions before any support services were initiated. She explained the problems to be physical and intellectual isolation of the learner from teaching institutions, teachers and fellow students; delayed feedback to students' communications and assignments; novel methods of instruction; competing interests for the learners' time and attention; limited access to additional reading and science facilities due to geographical location; family, peer, society and social attitudes against distance education in favor of the on-campus educational mode; learners' lack of

confidence; lack of financial support for the education and family at the same time; and distance education being new and therefore learning being more difficult for the student. She said that these problems result in frustration and dropout, limited achieving rates, and student over-dependence on correspondence notes. (See also OUT, 1993b, pp. 19-20).

Kamau (1995) further explained that such problems needed immediate action with an understanding that the purpose of the support services and the need they were intended to meet in each student would vary according to each learner's requirements as demanded by the institution. She described the way many institutions provide their support services saying:

> Many institutions tend to provide support services that enhance and facilitate effective teaching/learning by reducing the distance between learners and tutors and the host institution as a whole. This practice is aimed at minimizing dropout rates. These back-up services are therefore intended to provide the learners with the feeling that they are supported in their studies by the system that: teaches them what they want to learn, provides study materials that teach them effectively, marks their work thoroughly and reasonably, returns their marked assignments promptly, answers all their queries immediately, above all, shows interest in their personal problems and general welfare as distance learners. (p. 263)

She commented that to improve distance learning, as well as setting up the physical facilities support services must be built into the instructional materials as follows:

Instructional Devices for Interactive Learning: These must be interactive promoting participatory learning. Marland and Store (1991) noted that the study materials require instructional devices such as organizers, objectives, brief content overview, pre-tests, emphasis of certain important points in the text, summaries, in-text reflective questions, and self-assessment tests.

The organizers provide prerequisite information and form a basis for learning new content while the overviews contain highly condensed salient points, and pre-tests help determine what potential learners know at the start of instruction. Objectives provide teachers with clear guidelines for selecting content and instructional methods and evaluation criteria. They also give learners a sense of direction. Including reflective in-text questions, summaries and self-assessment tests is recommended because these help the distant learner identify what they know and what they need to learn.

Radio and audio media are used to meet the challenges of geography and distance. They introduce the course or study units to the learners and highlight monthly or other

residential face-to-face tutorials, provide concrete examples or case discussions to explain or throw more light on abstract ideas discussed in the units, give supplementary information which may not be available in the written texts, address areas that print cannot do such as sound in language study, reinforce materials already in print, give instructions for practical activities which cannot be done easily by print, and provide general tutorials and counseling services, and stimulate as well as motivate the student.

Tutorial Support: These are included in all programs as face-to-face -sessions, where students meet with their tutors. They help clarify certain difficult areas of content as well as provide students with opportunities to meet their peers. The role of the tutors is variant, from helping students with issues relating study and examination skills, advice on completion of assignments or projects, and feedback on learner performance and progress. However, experience has shown that a key role of the tutor is in motivating learners and assisting them to succeed. This, Kamau (1995, p. 264) said, is done through listening to learners' problems and helping to solve them, advising them on forming study groups, advising them on study techniques, helping them with time management and with setting goals and priorities to cope with their social and personal commitments, giving learners constructive, fair, positive and motivating comments. She also recommended that tutors make adequate preparations before any tutorial session and advise learners about the study process, rather than concentrating on content only. (See also OUT, 1993b, pp. 27-33, 36).

Kamau (1995, p. 265) explained that students expressed difficulties and problems with studying at a distance while working full-time as well as raising a family, some complained of hostile employers who refused them permission to attend the face-to-face-session, others uncooperative spouses who refused to spend money for the tuition fees. Frequent reported problems and difficulties included: over-commitment to other chores, uncooperative employers, frequent transfers, strained spouse and children relationships, lack of electricity and cassette recorders for studies at home, long distances to study centre, and difficulties to raise money for family up-keep and tuition fees for self and children who are schooling.

Discussing students' reactions towards some physical support services, Kamau (1995, p. 265) cited Gitau (1994) to explain that over-commitment limited the majority of

students in developing a regular time for their studies, and that learners coming from areas well served with public libraries were few. Thus students were forced to depend on their correspondence units only. To avoid the problem she suggested that study centres be equipped with the required references so that students could use them regularly. However, regardless of the fact that all marked students' assignments and other study materials were sent through the study centres, the distance to study centres limited many students from obtaining help from them. Post offices were found to be fairly accessible but rarely used by students because they were not reliable.

Based on these data Kamau (1995, p. 265) observed that students' perceptions of the quality of study materials and support services provided in distance learning are that study materials are appropriate, but support services do not assist students adequately because learners live far from the host institution or study centre, and the support services are not regularly accessible owing to distance, family, occupational and financial needs. Kamau (1995, p.265) recommends serious consideration of these factors when planning distance education programs to avoid large numbers of student dropouts. Although Kamau did not differentiate between male and female students' responses, it is important to consider the differential effects of distance, family, occupational and financial needs on women students.

SUMMARY

Researchers agree that distance education can effectively facilitate women's higher learning, but before this can be done, addressing effectively the societal barriers, conflicts and constraints affecting motivated women learners is critical (von Prümmer, 1988). The research has identified three major barriers to women's participation: isolation, lack of time from other work commitments, and family responsibilities. The government of Tanzania, together with the Open University of Tanzania, and the society in general must undertake the obligation to see that women get the necessary support to enable and encourage them to access and participate successfully in higher education. Women must therefore define the way(s) they think best suited for them to access, participate, and achieve higher education through distance education, for as Thompson (1983) stated:

> Unless women think much more deeply about themselves, make sense of their experiences and expectations in reference to their own needs and interests, and consider strategies for redefining the relationship with men in ways which will change the distribution of power and oppression to one of equality and respect, learning new roles will continue to be poor substitute for the practice of freedom and liberation. (p.106)

This is what this research sought for from the women students of OUT and the non-student women in Tanzania so as to put their views in perspective for the young women, since as Bailey (1991) pointed out,

> (while) young people may still see adults as responsible for the mess that the world is in, I do not believe that adults can either attempt to work for change by themselves or expect youths to deal with the problems. But we do genuinely have a duty to ask young people to give thought to the future and that we ourselves also have to be involved in the process. (p. 1)

Chapter 3

RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS AND METHOD

My research topic is focused on documenting the experiences that Tanzanian women go through in enrolling for and continuing with higher education at the OUT, identifying how the OUT can enhance the involvement of women, encourage more women to register, and help them participate more effectively in their studies with the OUT. The study is an attempt to explore ways in which the OUT can help solve the persisting problem of women students' under-representation (about 11 percent of the total enrollment in 1997) at the OUT since its first intake in 1994. Beginning in July, 1998, the research activities were scheduled over one and a half year period so as to follow the OUT's annual planned sequence of activities (student orientation, face-to-face sessions, practicals, timed-tests, and the annual examinations) and involved travel to 17 OUT regional centres and some of its local study centres throughout Tanzania.

PERSONAL ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Merriam (1988) advised that:

> whether one views the philosophical foundations of the case study from a pragmatic or historical perspective, or draws upon the qualitative paradigm, is not as important as reflecting on one's assumptions and making them explicit at the outset of a case study investigation. The selection of data-gathering techniques, the way one chooses to organize and interpret data, and notions of validity, reliability, and generalizability of one's findings hinge upon one's philosophical orientation. (p. 21)

Merriam's notion has been supported by several other researchers. For example, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) acknowledged that people tend to conduct research according to the experiences and assumptions they hold about the world (pp. 4-5), and that their methodology design adheres to what is most consonant with their socialized world view of seeing and understanding. In support of their view they cited Schwandt (1989, p. 399) saying:

> Our construction of the world, our values, and our ideas about how to inquire into those constructions, are mutually self-reinforcing. We conduct inquiry via a

> particular paradigm because it embodies assumptions about the world that we believe and values that we hold, and because we hold those assumptions and values we conduct inquiry according to the precepts of that paradigm. (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, p. 9)

Van Manen (1984) explained that to know oneself deeply, one must discover what lies at the ontological core of one's being (p. 39); thus, as we research the possible meanings of our lived experiences, we come to a fuller grasp of what it means to be in the world as a man, a woman, a child, while taking into account the social-cultural and historical traditions which have given meaning to our ways of being in the world. That answers to these questions are necessarily shaped by a person's cultural and social interactions has been acknowledged by Morgan (1997). He stated that

> shared values, shared beliefs, shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sense making are all different ways of describing culture. In talking about culture we are really talking about a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways. These patterns of understanding help us to cope with the situations being encountered and also provide a basis for making our own behavior sensible and meaningful. (p.138)

Hence, a person's epistemology, or what distinguishes different kinds of knowledge claims, and the criteria that distinguish between knowledge and non-knowledge, flow naturally from a person's ontology. The way that person views the world, constructs meaning, and establishes reality determines what that person considers knowledge. Similarly Plager (1994) cited Heidegger (1927/1962) and Dreyfus (1991) in an effort to explain the situatedness of human being-in-the-world. She noted:

> It is a world of shared background practices and familiarity. We get all of our possibilities and potentialities from this shared background. Our skills and practices are acquired from being-in-the-world of our cultures and societies. The intelligibility of how we use things (equipment) and relate to others in the world is all part of our understanding of being in our world of shared background practices and familiarity. It is because of this shared understanding that we are able to be involved with things, relations and situations in our world, to cope smoothly and skillfully in our everyday life, and to take a stand on what it is to be human beings in our world. As human beings we are engaged and involved in the world in a concernful way with practical activities. (p. 69)

Plager (1994, p.70) also explained our understanding and being. She said that we have understanding because we are always already familiar with our cultures and societies.

We grew up in this familiarity, therefore understanding makes it possible to uncover things in our world by disclosing them to us.

Working with the OUT has allowed me to make sense of the problem that exists there regarding women's access and women students' participation in studies with the OUT. Through my interaction with the women students I realized their problem. Through my place in the culture, I was able to bring the problem to the attention of the Vice Chancellor in the senate meetings. Although I consider this research as arising from personal interest, its answers are found in the shared experiences of the OUT women students and their close female friends or relatives who are non-students, and in the descriptions of the OUT personnel who have shared the world of culture and history of the OUT (Morgan, 1997, p. 138; Plager, 1994, p. 69; Van Manen, 1984, p. 38, 39).

Greene (1994, p. 423) noted that the research necessary for the improvement of education is that which is most useful for generating "know-how" that provides the understanding that can lead to invention and innovation. She argued (p. 435) that social sciences inquiries have to come to terms with a particular kind of knowing process by which persons in their everyday life interpret the meanings of their own actions and those of others with whom they are interacting. She said, in studying any kind of social reality, one has to take into account the subjective meaning of the actions of human beings from which social reality originates. For example, she explained that if an educational researcher is studying classrooms or realities of supervision, the researcher must take into account the meanings of what happens as articulated by the students, teachers, administrators, and all who are involved, in order to connect the qualitative research with the constructed reality of the participants. They do this by shaping and reshaping their experiences following the underlying traditional history and social reality of the group.

In a similar way, in this research my aim is to attempt to bring improvement to the educational practices for women students at the OUT. I have to take into account the OUT women students' understandings and perceptions of their experiences as students with the OUT. Therefore, as a researcher, I interviewed, made observations, and documented the particulars of these women, taking into account the meanings as articulated by them, by their non-student female friends or relatives, by the tutors and

administrators of the OUT, and by all who are involved in order to connect the qualitative research with their constructed reality.

Usher (1996, p. 18) asserted that hermeneutic/interpretive methodology is an influential epistemology in social and educational research because knowledge in social research is concerned with interpretation, meaning and illumination. He added that the methodology focuses on social practices, assuming that any human action is meaningful, and has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. He said that to explain the social world researchers need to understand the social world first, make sense of it, and understand the meanings that construct and are constructed by interactive human behavior, for human action is given meaning through interpretive frameworks (p. 18). Researchers engaged in human action and social practice research needed to seek to make sense of what they are researching through interpretive frameworks (p. 19). He called this process in research "double sense-making", or "double hermeneutic", meaning both the researcher and the respondents become interpreters and sense-makers in the research. This ties well with earlier views by Gadamer (1975), who argued that it is not possible for a researcher to separate himself or herself from the cultural or historical context defining their interpretive framework, for these are commonly located in a pre-understood world.

Usher (1996, pp. 19-22) further explained that interpretations are always circular, that is the interpretation of part of something depends on interpreting the whole and vice versa. He calls this circular interpretation the "hermeneutic circle" of interpretation, meaning that knowledge-formation in social research is conceived in a circular, interactive, spiral form. He also noted that the hermeneutic circularity of interpretation always takes place against a background of assumptions and presuppositions, beliefs and practices (traditions), which the researcher and the participants might not be fully aware of or cannot explain fully. Hence, research involves interpreting the actions of those who are themselves interpreters (that is, it involves interpretations of interpretations -the double hermeneutic practice), making the researcher also part of the background (tradition), giving meaning to their actions as researchers as well, although the researchers themselves might not be aware of doing it.

Gadamer (1975) earlier argued that in social science, knowledge is formed from the subject's situatedness, from a person's standpoint in history, society and culture, that is, any methodological inquiry has as its starting-point the pre-understandings which the researcher has of the participants, through sharing experiences with them. This way the researcher utilizing his or her own biases (as a starting point for acquiring knowledge) becomes more open-minded in the process of interpreting and understanding. Hence, Gadamer characterizes research within hermeneutic circles as a "fusion of horizons;" horizons meaning one's standpoint or situatedness in time, place, culture, gender and ethnicity; the fusion resulting from seeking knowledge, while grounded in a perspective arising from one's situatedness, a perspective which cannot be put aside during the process of inquiry. Because of its situatedness, the horizon is limited yet open to other horizons (standpoints, perspectives), which results in enlargement or broadening of one's own horizon. Therefore Usher (1996, p. 22) concluded that a fusion of horizons is the outcome of inter-subjective agreement where with different and conflicting interpretations, a consensus can be achieved despite differences. Hermeneutic understanding is therefore a learning experience involving a dialogue between the researcher and the respondents.

In my ontology, as a woman, I grew up in the Tanzanian culture experience and living within the dominant traditional culture. I made personal sense of the women sufferings from marginalization and oppression by the traditional lived culture, especially with regards to women education development. As a feminist woman I have been concerned and I have taken up the decision to query the Tanzanian authorities and or institutions that make/form the women marginalization in their education development. My inquiry as a woman, has become one voice among many other women voices, therefore become one of the many other women feminist voices in the world raising up issue of marginalization of many women in their own society, in this case the Tanzanian society as Olesen (1994) citing Eichler, 1986, P. 68 pointed out that:

> there are many feminisms, hence many views, -- whatever the qualitative research style, and whether or not self-consciously defined as feminist, these many voices share the outlook that it is important to center and make problematic women's diverse situations and the institutions and frames that influence those situations, and then to refer the examination of that problematic to

theoretical, policy, or action frameworks in the interest of realizing social justice for women.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) stated that, "Design is used in research to refer to the researcher's plan of how to proceed" (p. 58). However, they noted that qualitative educational researchers usually have loosely scheduled research designs. They explained that the way qualitative researchers proceed in research is flexible in that it is based on theoretical assumptions (that meaning and process are crucial in understanding human behavior, that descriptive data are what are important to collect, and that analysis is best done inductively) and on data collection traditions such as, participant observation, unstructured interviewing, and document analysis.

In my research, the way the problem is shaped, the research questions it raises, and the end product desired are rooted in my personal ontology and epistemology, which accepts that knowledge naturally flows from a person's being through cultural and social interactions (Morgan, 1997, p. 138; Plager, 1994, p. 69).

Naturalistic Inquiry

Elaborating on qualitative methodology in the constructivist paradigm, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) explained that

> since qualitative researchers deal with multiple, socially constructed realities or "qualities" that are complex and indivisible into discrete variables, they regard their research task as coming to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them. To make their interpretations, the researchers must gain access to the multiple perspectives of the participants. Their study designs, therefore, generally focus on in-depth, long-term interaction with the relevant people in one or several sites. The researcher becomes the main research instrument as he or she observes, asks questions, and interacts with research participants. The concern with researcher objectivity is replaced by a focus on the impact of subjectivity on the research process. (p. 6)

Guba and Lincoln (1981, p. 78) explained that naturalistic inquiry aims at understanding "actualities, social realities, and human perceptions." They further explained that it is a process geared to uncovering many personal but important stories told by real people, about real events, in real and natural ways. They said that the more general the provocation, the more these stories will reflect what the respondents view as salient

issues, the meaningful evidence, and the appropriate inferences. They argue that naturalistic inquiry attempts to present portions of life episodes documented through natural language and representing as closely as possible how people feel, what they know, and what their concerns, beliefs, perceptions and understandings are. Therefore, as Greene (1994, p. 423) claimed, "social science inquiries have to come to terms with a particular kind of knowing process by which persons in everyday life interpret the meanings of their own actions and those of others with whom they are interacting." Following these ontological and epistemological assumptions I worked within the constructivist paradigm to explore the OUT women students' experiences, understanding, and perceptions of their participation in university education. The exploration was interpretive, inductive, and theory generating (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 225) within the context of the study's participants.

Data Gathering

There were three categories of participants involved in this study: Women OUT students, their female non-student friends and relatives, and OUT regional officers and general administrative staff. In data gathering my main intention was to discover how the women students described their experiences and perception of their experiences of studying with the OUT beginning with the process of enrollment to course expectations, participation and completion rates of each year's study. The non-student women helped me discover how Tanzanian women perceive education and the value they attach to education in relation to other roles in their life, such as marriage, being a wife and mother, career employment, and self-esteem. The OUT personnel provided me with documents related to the women's issues, their views on women's experiences (in terms of OUT women students' problems, constraints and limitations in enrollment, participation and completion rates) and the OUT operational arrangements (how they pose problems, constraints and limitation to women's effective participation and completion rates with regard to their course expectations), and advice concerning alternatives that might improve the existing conditions.

Women OUT Students and Non-students

Although the OUT was able to identify the total number of women students registered in 1997, they had very little personal information about these students in the university database. Therefore, my first task was to obtain background demographic information which enlarged my understanding of these students and helped identify possible interviewees. I did this through reviewing the files held at the OUT. Some students used only their initials in registering so it was impossible to obtain a completely accurate count.

I had hoped to obtain interviews through responses to an initial survey handed out by regional directors. This proved to be ineffective since many regional directors had no knowledge of or contact with women students. In the meeting with the nine full time employed regional directors they were asking me questions such as "how do we get the women? How do we know them? They do not come to the regional centres, how can we make them come so that they take their envelopes?" Although I encouraged them to try to get them as much as they could, most of the regional directors signed out between 5 to 10 envelopes only, most of which I found still lying in their regional offices when I visited the regional centres. My personal attempts to send some envelopes through the women I managed to contact had very few returns due to the distances between the women themselves even where they knew each other. Others reported that they managed to hand out the envelopes and asked the women to mail them directly to me, but I received very few of them. Instead, I visited 17 of the 21 OUT regional centres in the country and sought access to the women students myself. In all I involved a total of 231 participants (109 women students and their 83 non-student close friends/or relatives, 6 achieving women educationists with Ph.D./Masters degrees, 13 OUT executive/senior personnel, 9 OUT regional directors and their 11 part time regional directors). I interviewed 81 of the OUT women students and 40 of their close non-student women friends and relatives, all 6 achieving women educationists, all 13 OUT executive and senior personnel, 8 of the full time regional directors and 2 of their part time regional directors. I spent extended time (7 to 14 full days) in each regional centre and its local study centres depending on the number and availability of the OUT women students in their homes or working places depending on the participant's choice of place and time to meet, traveled with them to see

other students, and experienced firsthand difficulties many face in studying in their natural settings. In addition, I visited four regional cetres on at least two occasions and this gave me the opportunity to follow up with any queries I had.

OUT Staff

In April 1999, I held peer de-briefing sessions with the OUT personnel on the survey and interview data that has been collected. I took the opportunity to approach selected OUT personnel who exhibited willingness and an ability to articulate their feelings, opinions and values on the research questions, to request an interview and interviewed them for about 30-45 minutes. I asked them to bring any relevant documents to discuss during the interview. This group had 11 people and included the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Registrar, Bursar, personnel in the Chancellor's office, selected Deans and tutors.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were held with women in regional and or study centres, their homes and workplaces depending on the women's own choices. I expected the number of women students at any one regional centre to be between one and five depending on the evidence or their participation in the activities in the regional centre. The numbers of interviews depended on the women available and willing to participate. I discussed the study questions informally with all those women who were present in the regional centre and willing to share their understandings and wrote notes in my journal. I then conducted the formal audiotaped interview with all woman student at the Centre who were willing to be taped, and had oral discussions with those who did not want to be taped and wrote notes in my journal immediately or in the evenings in my hotel room. Most women were willing to be taped but some preferred their stories be told in oral discussion.

The formal interviews for women students were semi-structured (Appendix 4A) which provides a chance to hear broad views from all selected participants while I probed for follow up of an issue to a more in-depth description. Fontana and Frey (1994), acknowledging the power of interviewing in research stated "interviewing is one of the

most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings" (p. 361) and "unstructured interviewing provides a greater breadth than the other methods of data collection given its qualitative nature" (p. 365).

About half the questions were seeking general demographic data. The remaining questions focused on the women's experiences with and recommendations for the OUT's registration, retention, and student support services.

Similarly, the interview scheduled for women non-students, OUT personnel and regional directors (Appendix 4B, 5A and 5B respectively) began with demographic and employment questions and continued with questions focused on the various aspects of the research study. The questions were used as a guide only and were introduced in the order that made most sense in the conversation that was at hand.

Group Interviews

Almost all women interviewed were willing to participate in the Dar-Es-Salaam group interviews, but many of them had financial difficulties in meeting their travel costs although I promised to meet their costs for accommodation and food. I chose 25 among those participating who expressed themselves well and promised to write them a letter inviting them to participate in a group interview in Dar-Es-Salaam. I asked each one to help me by bringing a close friend or relative. In the letter of invitation I asked them to meet their own traveling costs and promised to meet their accommodation, food and reimburse only their taxi, bus, train or ship travel ticket expenses after they participated, and pay them the same for a return ticket.

I invited approximately 25 women students and one of their non-student women friends to participate in audiotaped group interviews for two days (July 10 and 11, 1999) in Dar-Es-Salaam during the second face-to-face-session in July 10, 1999. A total of 31 women participated, 25 active, 3 dormant and 3 non-students). Fontana and Frey (1994, p. 364) explained that group interviewing is gaining in popularity among social scientists. They described it as

> the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in formal or informal settings. The use of the group interview is not meant to replace individual interviewing, but it is an option that deserves consideration because it

> can provide another level of data gathering or a perspective on the research problem not available through individual interviews. (p. 364)

I kept all the women in one group as they wanted to learn from each other. I met with the group from 4 pm to 9 pm after they had all participated in the face-to-face session, had their lunch, and rested for about an hour. Two assistants, one doing the audiotaping and the other doing the videotaping, provided technical support. In the group interviews the women's voices were crucially important. The videotape enabled me to keep track of the women's overlapping voices, tacit language information, and provided authenticity and accuracy of all the voices in the group interviews.

For the regional directors, I followed procedures similar to those described for the women's groups. Through the help of the director for regional services, who normally chairs all regional directors' meetings, I met with the participating regional directors after their own meeting in Dar-Es-Salaam on August 24, 1999. They were left in one group as they preferred to listen to all views presented. A total of 21 regional directors (11 full time and 10 part time) participated from 3 pm until 6.00 pm. The regional directors' voices were important since they brought to the study local information about women's regional education development diversities that are great in Tanzania, and are tied to the social-cultural and religious backgrounds dominant in the different tribes in the regions. Earlier I had individually interviewed all regional directors except one whom I could not visit in his regional centre.

The Interview Process

At the beginning of each interview I explained to the respondents the purpose and nature of my study and the conditions of their participation. All interviewing was done in Kiswahili (the national language) to make it easy and allow maximum freedom for the respondents to express their views, attitudes, perceptions and feelings more freely. Since all respondents had at least secondary education at grade 12 or 14, I assumed that communicating with them, especially in Kiswahili would give them an opportunity to comprehend the interview questions easily, and allow them to express themselves more precisely on cultural issues. Therefore, both the respondents and I were able to specifically respond to the issues in question and with ease. Fontana and Frey (1994, p.

366) commented on understanding the language and culture of the respondents stating, "Respondents may be fluent in the language of the interviewer, but there are different ways of saying things . . .certain things should not be said at all, linking language and cultural manifestations." Probing was done carefully following the need to learn more or clarify an idea from the respondent, especially where responses related closely to issues familiar to my personal life experiences. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) noted that naturalistic researchers recognize their natural place in the process of doing research. They stated that

> since interviewers in this type of research are interested in how people think about their lives, their experiences, and particular situations, they model their interview after a conversation between two trusting parties rather than on a formal question-and-answer session between a researcher and a respondent. (p. 47)

My research grew out of my own interest as a Tanzanian woman who grew up in the traditional tribal/ patrichial communities of the chagga people in a subsistence family. A woman's major role is rooted in marriage, child bearing and upbringing and family care. As such my education depended largely on my father and brothers' decisions and support, while my mother real needed me as a girl to help her with the family chores overburdening her.

Pilot Study

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) explained:

> A pilot study can test many aspects of your proposed research. It does so under circumstances that don't count, so that when they do count, you can put your best foot forward. Pilot your observations and interviews in situations and with people as close to the realities of your actual study as possible. Ideally, pilot study participants should be drawn from your target population. (p. 30)

My success in carrying out the interviews and observations in this research depended heavily on my personal skills as a researcher, interviewer, and observer. To improve my interviewing skills I carried out a pilot study with two Tanzanian women in Edmonton who were themselves qualified to be registered for studies with the OUT. To improve my observation skills, I observed a tutor for Athabasca University conducting a lesson through audio conferencing from her home. While these two pilot studies were confirmed by the methodology instructor in my EDADM 512 course, I also carried out

two other pilot studies in Tanzania, one with one OUT woman student, and one with an assistant to the OUT Secretary to the Council to help attune me to the research topic. Both my interviewing and observation skills improved as I carried out the actual field study interviews from one regional centre to another, and my journal notes from each interview helped me with necessary next plans or adjustments. By the time I came to do the group interviews and the in-depth interviews in Dar-Es-Salaam, I was better informed about the critical questions for discussion.

The pilot interview in Edmonton helped me learn how to constantly assume my role as an interviewer. I realized that asking a question and getting an answer in an interview is a much harder task than ordinary question and answer in normal life situations. This view has also been noted by Fontana and Frey (1994, p. 361). I learned to pay increased attention to the voices and the feelings of the respondents. I learned that to get the best out of the respondent I must try to: (a) be neutral and non-judgmental no matter how much the respondent deviates from the interview question; (b) avoid arguing; (c) be sensitive to the verbal and non-verbal messages being conveyed; (d) be a good reflective listener and be precise in my probes, that is, listen more than talk, listen with a sympathetic and lively interest, and when necessary make occasional rephrasing remarks by reflecting back the respondent's expressed ideas and views and summarizing the remarks, and check my understanding of the respondent's story (Merriam, 1988, p. 75).

Document Analysis

I was able to hold informal interviews with OUT personnel regarding the documents obtained from them. These included student enrollment records, student academic performance records, student loan records, student fee debt records, and student dropout and dormant records. Merriam (1988) acknowledged use of documents as data in qualitative research:

> The data found in documents can be used in the same manner as data from interviews or observations. The data can furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advance new categories and hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track change and developments. (p. 108)

The data helped me to develop a profile of the characteristics of the male and female students at the OUT.

Field Observations

As a complement and triangulation to the semi-structured interview data, and to aid my own understanding I also collected data through participatory observations and informal discussions in the 17 regional centres and their associated local study centres. I observed issues of location and conditions existing in each regional and local study centre, women students' homes and work places which I discussed with regional directors, women students, part-time tutors and counselors in order to discover the existing study conditions for the women students. The observations helped me develop more relevant questions for the group interviews held in Dar-Es-Salaam.

Fontana and Frey (1994) stated that "many of the data gathered in participant observation come from informal interviewing in the field" (p. 365). Earlier Merriam (1988) explained that observation is a primary method for collecting field data just as the interviews are (p. 87). She however quoted Patton (1980, p. 123) who wrote that "Training to be a skilled observer includes learning how to write descriptively; practicing the disciplined recording of field notes; knowing how to separate detail from the trivia . . .and using rigorous methods to validate observations" (p. 88). On the other hand Taylor and Bogdan (1984) argued that the real superiority of data collected by observation versus that collected by interviews lies in that observations give firsthand information as opposed to interviews whose data represent secondhand accounts of phenomena. Fontana and Frey (1994) also advised researchers doing observations to take notes regularly and promptly; write everything down, no matter how unimportant it may seem at the time; try to avoid distracting a respondent's attention while taking the notes; and analyze notes as frequently as possible (p. 368).

Field Notes

After each interview, I recorded in my field journal significant feelings, perceptions, reactions and gestures observed during the interview. My field journal notes guided my subsequent interview plans and questions, and provides tips for recalling the tacit language in the interviews during the write up of the report. For all informal interviews and discussions I also wrote summary notes in my journal, often at the end of each day. My field journal contained interview notes, observation notes, and reflections

and questions. Field notes were especially important since I could not depend on audiotapes, batteries or access to electricity. I therefore listened to the tapes and took summary notes as soon as possible after the event. In some places there was no access to electricity, and in places with electricity the electricity was often out; on such occasions I kept field notes as the conversation proceeded.

Data Analysis

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) explained that data analysis involves organizing what we have observed, heard and read to make sense of the acquired knowledge. They said that in working with data we must create sensible explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories, and link our story to other stories. To do so we categorize, synthesize, search for patterns, and interpret the data we have collected. They advised that, in qualitative studies, data analysis should be done simultaneously with data collection to enable the researcher to focus shape and re-shape the study as he or she consistently reflects on the data, organizes them and tries to discover what the participants intended as he or she proceeds with the study (see also Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 335).

Bearing Glesne and Peshkin's views in mind, I tried to do a preliminary analysis of each interview and set of observations in my journal notes to guide my subsequent plan and focus the next interview or observation. I had all audiotaped interviews transcribed and carried out a preliminary analysis of the observation and discussion notes, interview transcripts and documents connected to each regional centre. Because constructivist research designs are fluid and develop as the study proceeds, I began by sorting out my findings within the general sub-topics of my research: recruitment, retention, student support services, operational procedures and non-participation. This provided a beginning orientation to the data gathering and helped me see where redundancy, discrepancy and differences were most evident. I also held regular peer debriefing with two willing and able OUT colleagues and two University of Dar-Es-Salaam lecturers in order to identify areas of conflict or contradiction that needed further exploration or data collection before the data were brought to the University of Alberta for more in-depth analysis under the guidance of my research supervisor. At this stage, I had the patterns quite evident and I was able to focus on preparing the data for

presentation. This stage involved doing thorough re-reading and annotating, re-coding of topics, themes and issues (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Stake, 1995; Lincoln and Guba, 1985) as well as extensive writing and re-writing to assist in gaining insights which were grounded in the data.

Trustworthiness

The legitimacy of my study is rooted in the way the problem has been framed and the nature of my research questions using a multiple method approach, involving interviews, observation, and document analysis (Merriam, 1988, p. 68). Through the quality of its presentation, data collecting and data analysis, it should exhibit trustworthiness.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 301-327) listed, discussed and explained extensively four criteria used by naturalistic inquirers to account for trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (see also Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, pp. 13-14; Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 114; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, p. 146-147; and Guba, 1981, pp. 79-87). Credibility refers to establishing the truth value of an inquiry which is achieved by ensuring genuine similarity between participant perceptions and researcher conclusions (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p. 7). Transferability refers to the degree of similarity of "fittingness" between two context research backgrounds (Guba, 1981, p. 81) based on thick description of data as explained by Van Manen (1984, p. 51) that in telling our own story of lived experience, we know that our experiences are also the possible experiences of others. Dependability refers to the consistency of results from one data gathering method to another which is made possible by the researcher using more than one method and "outsider audit" (Guba, 1981, p. 86). Confirmability refers to observer neutrality and possible bias that the researcher can bring to the phenomena under investigation, and it is possible to minimize the researcher's effect through triangulation and the researcher "practicing reflexivity" (Guba, 1981, p. 87).

Similarly Glesne and Peshkin (1992, pp. 146-147) believed that it is important for researchers to validate their data. They also suggested several ways (modes) in which data could be validated (see also Guba, 1981, pp. 83-88). These include:

1. Getting the respondent to confirm and approve the rough drafts transcribed from the audio-tapes and the interpretive process before its final printed report (member checks) for better credibility and authenticity of the data (see also Lincoln and Guba, 1990);

2. Getting able colleagues, friends and experts to check on your planning, collection, analyzing and writing up of your findings to identify any contradictions and affirm the plans and data collected for better credibility;

3. Using a variety of methods (such as interviews, observations and documentation) to observe the same phenomenon to make the findings more authentic for confirmability and dependability (see also Lincoln and Guba, 1990);

4. Spending enough time in the field collecting data so that respondents have an opportunity to become familiar with the researcher, therefore encouraging respondents to be more free, to tell more, and be willing to clarify better their feelings and perceptions, hence enabling the researcher to obtain more credible and dependable data true value data (see also Merriam, 1988, pp. 67-103).

5. Being able to cross-check one's own and others' subjectivity while in the field by trying to collect as much data as possible and from as many sources as possible by asking oneself questions such as: Whom do I not see? Whom have I seen less often? Where do I not go? Where have I gone less often? With whom do I have special relationships, and in what light would they interpret the phenomena? What data collecting means have I not used that could provide additional insight? The ability for the researcher to be aware of personal biases gives the researcher opportunity to have more trustworthy interpretations of the findings by comparing various notes from different sources and one's own beliefs (see also Merriam, 1988, pp.67-103); and

6. Realizing one's own limitations such as the nature of participants involved, the nature of documents obtained and setting-in experiences (circumstances) under which the researcher has to conduct the interviews or discussions which the researcher have to accept, and including them in the report to help evaluators and readers understand what the researcher experienced and to know the real situation from which the data are obtained (see also Ruby, 1980, pp. 153-179; Usher, 1996a).

In order to ensure trustworthiness in the findings of my study I adopted the following procedures:

1. I used prolonged engagement at each site. Spending extended time at the site provided me with an opportunity to overcome distortions in information produced by respondents due to unfamiliar relationships; a chance to test my own biases and faulty perceptions about the women's experiences, as well as that of different respondents; and ample time to review my journal notes for any trivial fallacies or biased information by being able to observe or acquire more trustworthy information from the respondents. It also provided respondents with an opportunity to become familiar with me and my research purpose, and to observe that it did not jeopardize the respondent's reputation or harm their studies or life in any way.

In order to have extended time with respondents I scheduled all interview activities to follow the OUT study activities (orientation, first and second face-to-face-sessions, practical sessions, first and second timed-tests and the annual examinations) so that I had the time to be with and around the participants to develop familiarity with them, and perceive the respondents' social-cultural climate in their settings. This helped me know which women students could best express themselves in the interview and how to approach the whole exercise of interviewing them. I spend seven to fourteen days at each selected regional centre and at least one to two of its associated local study centres depending on the length of the OUT activity at hand. I participated in each regional centre's OUT study activities as an observer for at least three days while I held informal interviews and discussions with the regional directors, part-time tutors, and any woman student present before embarking on the individual women students' interviews. For orientation and face-to face sessions which are one day long activities I spend the whole day participating, holding informal discussions, and observing the activity, while I negotiated with the willing women present to talk with them at the end of the day for those available at the regional centre, and/or meet them in their homes, work places or study centre any other day following the session. While I talk informally to the women I asked them to get for me their close relative, or friend, and also set up interviews of 30-45 minutes each for the two to three days following their session to discuss their

experiences of the actual session in which they participated, their study conditions, and also meet and talk with their friends or relatives of their choice.

2. I made persistent observations at the site. This technique provided me with a chance to identify pervasive qualities as well as typical characteristics of the people, social-culture and place. I had opportunities for extended interaction with the women students, therefore enabling me to understand their characteristics and what was important or unimportant to my research inquiry. This was also a time to learn what was irrelevant in the women's experiences and problems, to discard those ideas, and continue to make use of the relevant experiences; as well as the opportunity to become familiar with the settings at the centre and in their homes. This helped me to understand their lives, and it gave me time to adjust my journals for more trustworthy information.

3. I used peer debriefing. Peer debriefing provided me the opportunity to test my growing research insights and to expose myself better to the issues embedded in the research questions. In order to do peer debriefing I have established a field research office at the OUT. This enabled me to reach my colleagues and the administrative personnel at the OUT easily. Their discussions helped me to make corrections and or adjustments in my initial analysis of the data. The OUT Vice Chancellor was my field supervisor while doing my research in Tanzania. Further peer debriefing involved willing and able student colleagues, and my research supervisor.

4. I also did triangulation. Triangulation provided me with the opportunity to crosscheck data and interpretations especially when different informants gave conflicting or contradicting information. Triangulation is not meant to provide a single answer; rather it is meant to bring richness and diversity to a topic so that it is not reduced to a simplistic solution.

In order to do triangulation, I used three approaches: (a) a variety of methods (interviews, observations and documentation); (b) different sources of respondents (women students, non-student women, and the OUT personnel); (c) different settings and circumstances (the OUT study activities -orientation, first and second face-to-face-sessions, practical sessions, first and second timed-tests, and the annual examinations) to obtain information from seventeen different purposefully selected regional centres and their associated local study centres, each visit done during any one of the OUT study

activities. In addition I held in Dar-Es-Salaam, group interviews of 25 active and 3 dormant women students and 3 non-student women, and a group interview of all full and part time regional directors.

5. I tried to collect referential adequacy materials. Collecting referential adequacy material provided me with exhibits for asserted testimonies.

I obtained some documents on the women students' records at the OUT including enrollment records, student academic performance records, student loan records, student fee debt records and student dropout/dormant records. I audio recorded most formal interviews, and videotaped the Dar-Es-Salaam groups.

6. I did member checks. Because I went back to four sites on two occasions, it gave me the opportunity to confirm and get the approval of the respondents on transcribed and initial interpretations of data. For example, the respondents helped me reflect their perspectives, informed me of problematic sections of the data if published and even helped with developing new perspectives on their information.

7. After the field study was completed I spent a lot of time establishing structural corroboration (coherence). To establish structural corroboration (a) I reviewed interpretations against all other data to ensure that there were no internal conflicts or contradictions; (b) identified data which were conflicting or contradicting and found out reasons to explain the cause(s) for the differences (the data may be coming out of a different source with different perspective); (c) explained rival explanations; and (d) saw that the overall report exhibited coherence (i.e. consistency, synchronism, logic, and that the report stands as one piece). In establishing structural corroboration I compared the themes developed from the different methods to see how much they all converge to provide similar answers to the sub-questions in my research.

8. I also sought to establish referential adequacy. This meant testing my analysis and interpretations against the acquired documents, and the audiotaped and videotaped recordings collected in the field work, and ensuring that I have correct and sufficient materials that can be used as empirical data by my supervisory and examination committee to test my conclusions.

In order to establish referential adequacy I listened many times to the audiotapes and watched the videotapes and compared them against the different themes developed

from the analysis; I went through the document analysis and compared it with the themes developed.

9. I practiced reflexivity. Practicing reflexivity through keeping a journal and regular debriefing enabled me to reveal to evaluators and readers my personal underlying epistemological assumptions which led me to formulate the research problem and the study questions in the way they are and to present the findings the way they appear.

Ethics

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta and carried out as specified.

Chapter 4

STUDY FINDINGS

The research questions were used to guide the data analysis of the interviews, conversations, focus group discussions and documents obtained in this study. First, the data were sorted keeping these issues in mind and then categorized based on the initial sort. These were then reviewed for themes, and barriers and difficulties were identified. This chapter contains major findings under these two headings. In each case, given the multiplicity of stories collected, I have chosen those that I thought best reflected the views of the participants on that topic.

BARRIERS TO ENROLLMENT

Research Question 1. *What barriers keep women from enrolling for higher education with the OUT?*

Two types of barriers were identified from the participants' responses, barriers associated with activities or non-activities of the OUT and those related to the socio-cultural context in which women students live.

Institutional Barriers

In 1999, women formed only 12 percent (683 women) of the total (5,689) student population (MSTHE, 1999). Much of the information provided by participants indicated that the non-participation of women arises from a number of factors, principally, OUT lack of funding and inadequate publicity, and applicants' financial concerns, poor educational background, lack of confidence in studying by distance education, lack of female role models, and an assessment that OUT programs are not relevant to their lives.

Lack of operational funding

An executive official at the OUT raised the issue of operational costs complaining that the university has been compelled to operate as a business in order to survive. This

has prevented the OUT from waiving the tuition fees for women. Justifying the financial dilemma at the OUT, he explained that, in getting the OUT on the ground, study materials for ten disciplines were purchased from the University of Nairobi to help initiate the OUT first programs in 1994. As for the radio programs, when these arrived in Tanzania it was at the time of the financial liberalization policy, when all prices rose. He said that the National Radio sought Ts 150 million to run only one half hour air program per week for the OUT students, which the OUT could not afford, and the government could not provide extra funding. Since inception, the OUT has been forced to manage its programs through very difficult financial crises, and has been unable to take use the newer learning technologies. Recently, funds obtained from David Anderson Africa Trust helped the OUT build its own recording and dubbing facilities.

Inadequate OUT publicity

Staff from the registrars' office and some OUT documents indicated that the university has a very systematic process for recruiting its students each year, but the regional directors, some OUT personnel, women students and non students explained that one of the major factors limiting women from enrolling was associated with the women's lack of information about OUT.

The student counselor and regional directors complained that the OUT had never provided the opportunity for student counseling to be done in any of the regions to try to encourage women to come forward and register. Similarly, a senior student counselor reported that the OUT has never given her a chance to visit students in their regions. She informed me that, even in Dar-Es-Salaam, where the OUT headquarters is located, there are women who are not informed of the OUT's existence, and that even those informed are not sensitized.

The counselor explained personal efforts in trying to reach women. She said that, during her trip to supervise a timed test in a regional center, she found that, despite the regional center having a full time male regional director for several years, only one woman student participated during the whole timed test session she was supervising. She lamented that, as counselor she was much concerned and frustrated. As such she decided to take personal initiative and visit all secondary schools around the town and to meet with some female secondary school teachers, talk to them and find out. She visited all the

schools and tried to talk to the women, and very young women told her that they did not know that there was the OUT for them. She said this made her realize that in this region women are not in fact sensitized at all as these schools were just right there in town and not far in the rural, or remote places. She thought that if the region had somebody to give a press release, and to hold a conference and tell women about the University, many women would be interested in the OUT. She said that this has made her think the situation is the same for the whole country. Therefore, after her mini-investigation, her observations indicated that actually the issue of OUT having very few women enrolling with it is not that women are not interested to study, but that one of the major limitations is that they have not been informed, sensitized encouraged and motivated. She stated

> It doesn't mean that women don't want to study. If they were sensitized there are so many institutions which could come forward to even pay, to give them scholarships, but the women themselves are not aware and or sensitized so they don't enroll, and the few who are aware are not determined to study because they are not motivated.

One regional director explained that his major responsibilities have been to advise and help students on both academic and administrative matters in the region. He said that administratively he informs the public about the OUT existence and sensitizes people to enroll with the OUT programs. He carries out this task by putting up posters and individually visiting people in whatever environment they may be (e.g. the church, Teachers Colleges, high secondary schools). He claimed that advertising the OUT is the basic role of a Regional Director but lamented that his task has been severely limited by lack of facilities such as reliable transport, support staff, reliable communications, funds, and skills and reliable technology, such as computers necessary to back up the student services, as such many, especially the women dropout soon they start studying.

Another regional director noted that the way OUT publicized itself does not get to the expected audience. He gave many reasons for this. He thought it was due to the circumstances and the environment of the country and its people --such as distance to the study and regional centres, the lack of affordability due to lack of employment and low salaries. He mentioned time constraints due to multiple roles, the lack of reading culture due to the way women are brought up; and lack of opportunity for many rural women to travel to regional towns, or public places without their husbands' consents. He

commented that the university advertises itself through the prospectus, radio, TV, posters, newspapers and by the regional director physically visiting places. However if some people live in remote areas, or have no radio or TV, they may not hear the announcements, and if the people cannot buy the papers they will not be able to read them. He gave a personal experience saying that, even in Dar-Es-Salaam itself, he has seen that many employees are not provided newspapers, and many do not get the chance to even borrow from friends when they cannot afford to buy one for themselves.

Financial Concerns

Financial constraints were mentioned in many OUT women's stories as a limitation preventing them from enrolling with the OUT. While most discussed the problem with finding the tuition fees others mentioned the ongoing costs for travel to the regional and study centre and library access.

One student explained that most women cannot afford their education costs because many are employed in very low paying jobs earning about Ts35, 000 per month, and that family small business incomes that in the past provided women with income are no longer profit making in today's fiscal climate. She said, for most women, by the time they find they can get the time and energy to study, their children also have grown up and are attending secondary school where school fees are above Ts60, 000 in government schools, and over Ts80, 000 for private secondary schools per year for day scholars. Uniforms, bedding, transport and stationary are separate overhead costs. The student further explained that, usually husbands do not provide financial support for their families.

She lamented her own experiences saying that, her husband died and left nothing that could help with the children's education. As a mother, she had to find the means to educate the children and herself. She explained that, even for those with husbands, some husbands are just *"duplicates."* They are not capable of providing much support. Many husbands have lots of money but are reluctant to provide for their family when they have working wives, but they just like to be there, as heads and controllers of the family as provided by tradition and law of the country.

She thinks the majority of Tanzanian men do not really do much to help their wives financially when they are studying because they do not want them to study,

particularly for university education, because they fear that the wives might become better educated than themselves, and that they will fail to control them the way they want in the marriage. She elaborated that very few husbands, usually those already having higher degrees than their own wives, actually may be willing to support wives and pay for the children's education. The fact that most husbands do not like higher education for their wives aggravates the wives' financial constraints making most married women unable to afford their education costs even if they are employed in better paying jobs. Several other stories raised similar issues over and over again.

The woman counselor pointed out that while women return from work to their families, men tend to socialize and it is at those times men find out about the OUT and how to study, register, obtain tuition assistance, etc. Men can decide that in order to obtain tuition fees, they do not want to have any child in the family start school for this demands money and they leave all issues of running the family (children's school tuition, uniforms, stationary medical care, food etc) to their wives until they have managed to get enough money to register themselves. She explained that the women are busy with their small family economic projects (gardening vegetables, raising some chicken, pigs, cows for milk, making and selling some donuts, "chapaties," "maandazis," "iced water juices," doing extra evening class tuitions etc) to try to keep the family needs met, while the husbands are comfortably studying with the OUT and have paid all the tuition fees. She believed that the majority of men also do not discuss education matters, or their own development issues with their wives so their wives can never learn the OUT information from them.

Regional directors and women students reported that the distances to study centres are too long, some have no bus routes to them, and even where the buses are available the fares are too high to afford as they have too many other family costs to deal with. The National Regional Library in the regional towns are too far and the library service charges too high for many since some libraries require they pay Ts500 per visit, while others asked Ts20, 000 for membership. The libraries, he explained, have been forces to charge high due to loss of too many books.

One woman student explained that she had been married and was eventually divorce within the Muslim faith which is allowed. When she began studying with the

OUT she discovered that an external organization with rural integrated project services was supporting some local women's studies. She and a friend went to seek for scholarships. The project manager asked them if they were married. Her friend said yes, and she was granted a full scholarship at once regardless of her coming from a well to do marriage; when she said she was divorced, the manager demanded she sleep with him before he would give her the loan. The most annoying thing, she complained, was the way men would demand sex without fear, as if it is their right, as if it is something normal to ask a woman just like that. I heard many similar stories.

No role models for women students at the OUT to market its programs

Lack of other student role models was mentioned by a number of participants. Several male regional directors reported that the stress women experience in balancing their studies and other responsibilities also discourages other non-student women from enrolling with the OUT as they observe the stress the women students' experience.

A fifth year student said that many people including women themselves have a low opinion of the quality of education obtained through the distance mode. This concern with quality arose many times in relation to the OUT operational procedures

Women's stories showed that many women were scared of studying university education by distance, especially after observing the enrolled students' difficulties in combining their studies and family roles and that they observed that the women get very stressed. Many of them explained this saying, "It is not worth it", meaning the difficulties women face in studying and the rewards that come out of the education gained, for a woman it does not pay the costs! For instance, one non-student explained that she felt that she was not ready [to study] because she couldn't know whether she would be able to make it because she saw her two teacher colleagues who are OUT students experiencing lots of problems with getting their study materials from the OUT, especially since she also has to cope with the care of her small children and her old parents. And another drop out Foundation student explained that, although she really loved her distance studies very much and was really committed to studying very hard, she came to find out that there were big problems with these distance studies. She cited some of these difficult experiences as getting part time tutors, the ever-escalating student overhead costs, and too many demands from husbands.

Gender bias

A senior administrative official at the OUT explained that distance education programs are designed for those who are ready to push themselves rather than to be pushed by somebody.

> My own view would be that distance education program is designed to be for those who are ready to push themselves. There is lots of self-pushing rather than to be pushed by somebody. So, our [OUT] responsibility is to provide the enabling environment, and it is for the clientele to take the advantage of the environment that is provided. It's like lying pipes, water pipes in urban setting in a cosmopolitan center, - that is our [OUT] responsibility. But it's for the members of the cosmopolitan settings to make advantage of the water of such an amenity thus provided. So, the responsibility rests on the general public, on the target groups, on the clientele. The best that could be done within the system would be may be to raise consciousness; awareness of the existence of such programs, the levels of such programs, the potential of such programs, and may be the benefit of such programs.

This administrator thought the OUT was doing everything necessary to support women and seemed oblivious of the real issues facing women in Tanzania. Similarly, when I held discussions with regional directors, I found that during discussions one or another would support the traditional view of wives as under the control of their husband and required to do all the household and family chores. Several in the regional centers, and one in the "Regional Director Focus Group" claimed that because the women get married (not "marry" in Kiswahili "anaolewa" siyo "anaoa") they are accepting the husband's control.

It is important to note meanings in implied traditions, for example, the Kiswahili language distinguishes the implied meanings of behavior that men "marry," and women "get married." Each of these behaviors has different meanings and connotations with implications for gender cultural roles, –that men become head and provider in families and society, controlling the woman as they marry them; women assume subservient positions and are followers to the men as they get married to them; or just the feeling that if you are a woman and you decide to get married, it automatically means that you accept subservient position to your husband, he will control you and is providing for you or your benefits.

Women potential and actual students faced cultural prohibitions through OUT staff who may not be aware of their own biases and their effect on women students.

Students told of a number of specific incidents in this regard where the income of the (usually non-participating) husband was the deciding factor in obtaining assistance not the woman's lack of funds. A male founding OUT senior finance officer (1999) claimed that the attitude of the society towards women denies them the freedom to decide on their own to participate in higher studies.

> I think it is kind of behavior, or attitude that is in our society which makes a woman feel and accept that situation [that she is not supposed to go for higher education]. We have to accept a reality in the society that many people believe that women cannot do university studies unless they are asked/told/forced/ to do so by somebody. This means if women do not get their spouses encouraging them, they will not get the confidence to do it. This is like having a friend who drink, if the friend encourages you to drink, it is very possible that you will also drink, or if you have a friend who builds houses and he encourages you to build a house you will know where to look for a good plot and start building a house for yourself. So it very much depends on the spouse strength of encouragement, and the society attitude towards women when they go for higher learning or they don't go. It depends so much on what society expects of women.

Another senior male OUT official explaining why so many women do not enroll for higher education with the OUT said, "I think although financial problems are very important, but lack of encouragement from the over all society, and the government is a more serious issue for women." The male founding OUT senior finance officer (1999) explained that as a senior finance officer, since 1995, many women with financial difficulties come to his office. He confessed that while the OUT really wants to help women register, it is very difficult to do so when very strange things may be happening to the women themselves from perhaps their family back in their homes. For example, he said that one time a woman a teacher in a secondary school in Dar-Es-Salaam came to his office. At her arrival in his office she just started crying bitterly. He insisted that she tell him her real problem. So, she started telling her story that her husband decided to leave her with all her children because she decided to do university studies. With a big sigh, he said:

> "Those were issues in her family, -the husband just decided to take another woman and she and her children were just left without any care or support (bila matumizi au msaada wowote). She had no money to pay for the tuition fees, and her salary as a teacher was not enough."

So, he told her that he thought there were two possible ways to help her solve her problems. One was for her to use the exchequer system where the ministry she works with would draw up an agreement with the OUT to deduct the money slowly throughout the year straight from her salary each month and pay it straight to the OUT. This way she would not be obliged to meet the 60 % payment of the tuition fees before she could get any books because the ministry would be responsible to pay the OUT the money throughout the year. He decided to allow her to fill the form and take the books she wanted if she really wanted to study. And then she should do what he had told her, –to use the exchequer system to be able to pay her fees. Secondly, he explained to her that she could find out if she could be entitled to get any of the loan from the ministry she works with, or to be eligible for any of the David Anderson Africa Trust Fund, and the OUT best student awards). He also warned her strongly that the OUT was also concerned about many women who have been awarded the funds, but are not studying for various reasons. This has been very discouraging on the part of the OUT and to the donors as well.

However, a student had explained to me that when she initiated the exchequer system with the Ministry of Education, she found out that sometimes, it is misunderstood by the Ministry and the Ministry thinks that somebody had a loan which is been recovered, so they continue to deduct the money but never arrange with the OUT, and that it can cost a lot of time for the student to have to travel to the ministries in Dar-Es-Es-Salaam to ask them to change. Sometimes it takes a lot of trouble to get it changed too, for often the employees files get lost and temporary files get arranged if someone had been purposely actually taking the money away instead of sending it to the OUT. Also, she pointed out that it is not so easy for every woman to do that because, some of the husbands control the salaries, so it cannot happen.

However, although the official did try to mediate the woman's problems, still it can be observed that the decision is lopsided (gender biased), in that he could not understand when the woman said that she had a salary, but it was not enough to sustain her family. As well, there are only about 20 sponsorships in total for women, 10 from the trust and 10 developed through fund-raising. As the official pointed out, until these women complete, no one else can be awarded a sponsorship.

A founding woman Senator and Councilor of OUT (1999) explained that, many times since the OUT inception (1994), women Senators and Councilors have brought up at the senate and council meetings, the issues of women participation for the OUT programs, but in her estimation, the OUT paid only "lip-service" to the issue. She stated that:

> Women senators and councilors have been raising this matter, over, and over, and over, and over, but usually what they do is just show their statistics,--whatever statistics they give us they must tell us whether is female or male, every time,--and now they've got used to it and they show us.
> We have proposed many ways of reaching women, and giving the idea of open learning as the way for women and girls to catch-up with their education because it can be done along with their other family chores. It is of course another job on top, overburdening women with what they have already in their roles, but still it is an opening for them to go back into education. But, we have failed very much. I cannot say we have done much. We have paid "lip-service" more than really do something tangible.

An unmarried fifth year student aged 38 discussed her hesitation in enrolling with the OUT. Although she learned about the OUT from radio announcements in 1994, she could not decide to enroll right away because she felt that she was limited in many ways to be able to cope with such studies. Her elder brother, who works in the Ministry of Education in Dar-Es-Salaam encouraged her. She described her concerns.

She was the only teacher for Geography and History in her girls' secondary school which had up to four streams for each class. She said that after she has taught all those classes she was very tired, so she felt that she would not have the time to study, and if she tried to divide up her time she worried that the students would suffer. She had to choose between going for further studies and helping the girls get sufficient teaching in their secondary school education, and she choose to be committed to helping the girls. She said that another thing which held her back from enrolling was the cost of the distance teaching approach. She would have to depend on her salary to be able to meet her own costs of transport, accommodation, food and health care in case she fell sick. She had no other sources of income. She was also living close to her family, and was responsible to take care of her mother, her elder sister and her aunt who were widows, and her uncle who had no family and was disabled. She complained that such things made her fear if she started studying she would not afford to meet the costs. She

complained that the relatives come crying for help and it is difficult to not help them when you are close to them and they know you are employed. However, she knew that she needed more education, as she was aware that there was a difference in work performance, and even in discussing any issue between people with a diploma like herself and those with a degree. She said her brother's encouragement helped her decide to try the studies because she knew he would help her especially with the financial support.

Fear of the distance education system (Independent study)

Most full time regional directors explained that both women and men are used to the traditional system of education where there is a teacher physically teaching the class. Many potential students of OUT do not trust themselves that they can study on their own and pass examinations. There must be someone physically teaching in order for the learners to trust their own abilities to study effectively. The stories suggested that the regional directors are pessimistic that many students will accept the distance method of teaching as practical to them, and believed this to be one of the major problems students were facing. They noted that the students, especially the women, continue to ask for more and more local part timers to come forward to teach them, while the OUT finds that many of these part timers need to really take time to grow enough to manage the students' needs appropriately.

The regional directors see that the major problem for students as lack of confidence especially for women students because most Tanzanian women are not brought up with much academic work where they have to study on their own.

Distance education irrelevant to their lives

A fifth year student explained that the rural women usually feel that OUT education is not really meant for them because it is situated only in regional towns, which usually they cannot get the permission from their husbands to go to. She said that, women in rural areas are always very busy with their daily ways of life in the villages. As such, since the OUT is placed in towns the women do not even hear about it. If by chance they hear about it they do not perceive it is also meant for the rural women, especially since the teaching method is unfamiliar to them. She suggested that for the OUT to be more attractive to rural women, it should also be located in their rural environments, be more accessible, without having to depend on transport. She argued that, since the rural people

depend, and are used to making their living in the rural ways of life, they do not really attach much value to the education brought to them by the OUT as it is now. She suggested that the OUT teach also some things that the rural people need to know about their ways of life such as agriculture, animal husbandry, family care, drama, etc. She complained that many rural people feel OUT education does not reflect/respond to their immediate needs of life.

The women do not see why they should take the trouble to participate in the OUT programs for they cannot see the way of using the education in their environments. She reported that when she attempts to encourage some women, particularly those teaching in primary schools in her rural areas, she usually gets responses such as:

> Why trouble myself, how can I go there, what will I tell my husband I am looking for, after all the education is located in town, while all I am looking for is just good life, nice family, nice children, good house, good environment to live in, which I already have in the village!

The student said that, she actually noted from the women's responses as she encourages them that the rich women in the rural areas are 'tamed' by their husbands' money power. She said that this is their major problem to accepting enrolling with the OUT because they find no need for the education for their lives. This the student stated in Kiswahili language that:

> Wanawake vijijini wamefugwa na money power ya waume zao." Hili linawapa matatizo kuwa na uamuzi kujiunga na OUT, labda elimu yenyewe iwe ya kuvutia sana, na waikubali waume zao.

However, she also mentioned that in the region, there are also some men, particularly rich businessmen, who like very much to educate their wives, but they do not like if the wives have to go to the towns and be using guesthouses and hotels to sleep in with all those other male students and male tutors from Dar-Es-Salaam as they do their studies.

An achieving woman scholar explained that the rural women do not really understand the importance of the university education to them. She highlighted her views saying that, in order for one to see the importance of the university education, particularly by distance mode depends very much on where one is living and how the person has been raised up and socialized. She pointed out that in rural areas there is a "vicious circle" of replicating what people see and do every day to make their daily living. Therefore when

the education is located in town she said that, it depicts a different way of life for the rural people, particularly when these people are adults already. She explained it is difficult for these rural people to start thinking of changing much on their already established means of living. As such, they see that the education is not meant for them, and after all they cannot afford the costs involved particularly when they have to pay, and use environments such as the hotels and guest houses that are not readily acceptable to their already built up culture. She explained that, usually the first way of life a person comes in contact with at birth is very powerful in making a particular meaning in their lives, and to change them needs lots of sensitization. This she stated in Kiswahili saying:

> Mtoto anapozaliwa kule kijijini anakulia kuona, kusikia na kuhisi kwenye ubongo wake mazingira yake ... na hayo mawazo yanakuwa yamemkaa ... na inakuwa vigumu sana kuyabadilisha anapokuwa mtu mzima, ndiyo maana inahitaji kuhamasishwa sana.

As such she explained that, education, particularly at university level, and by distance has a lot of confusion in the mind for the traditionally developed people's values already acquired in life as adult learners. She suggests that, there must be first of all, lots of sensitization to help women, especially the married ones with their husbands to understand the importance of the higher education, particularly by distance at a time that it can be obtained.

Also, a male senior OUT manpower officer explained that most women in towns and wives of big people do not see the need to do the university studies through the distance method, particularly if they have to pay a tuition fee to study. He elaborated his views saying that, this is because the women have husbands who are holding big government jobs and or have big business in the towns. As such the men have no time, or do not see the need to encourage their wives to go for such studies while they can afford a lot of money for them and their families, and the wives are busy managing their family business in the towns. He said that, the big people if they have wives with a diploma in education they feel that is more than enough for a woman because of their position in the society and the roles ascribed to them by society. He claimed that women also are brought up to think they have achieved enough if they can get married, particularly to a rich man, therefore the education they get is not as important to them as the marriage. He further claimed that the women's attitudes towards university education is an outcome of

the way the girls and women are brought up (the socialization) in the society. He suggested that the government, the society and the OUT itself must really do a lot of sensitization and encouragement, but not force them, and provide attractive and very generous support such as scholarships so that the women and their husbands see the need for participating in the university education, and are able to seize and manage their studies without much stress.

Explaining her perceptions why many women do not enroll with the OUT, one student said that there are two categories of women when thinking of university education, those living in towns and those in the villages. When she started studying, she still worked and lived in her regional town. She noted that there were many women qualified to enroll for degree programs with the OUT, but she explained that given the kind of life the women live, they do not see the need to do university studies. For instance, she said that, there are women who are quite settled with a husband, a family and good economic projects. These do not have the time to study. When she inquired from them why they do not enroll with the OUT, they replied that their husbands refuse them, or they have too many other things to do, or they started studying, but whenever their husbands found them studying they would always ask them to put away the books and at last they got tired of that and gave up studying. She said that some other women would tell her things like,"Me, --to study, --you are kidding, -- to look for what? -- Who will help take care of my economic projects?" Such responses from fellow women even make her feel lost, thinking that may be she has also made a wrong choice in life, and worse still is that she has to pay lots of money to do the studies, and all other related stress that go with studying struggles. As such she perceived that, the town women are not enrolling with the OUT because they look down upon the education, especially because they get discouraged by the comments from each other. Their husbands who are rich enough despise the whole idea to study at university which does not really add much money to their already good income, therefore they do not allow the wives to study because they want them to look after the family economic projects.

For the rural women, she explained with big sorrows saying in Kiswahili that:

> Kule wanawake wamejisahau kabisaa kujiendeleza! Lakini wapo tu wengi wenye sifa nzuri tu, wengi wao waalimu. Lakini kila ukimwambia vipi hutaki kujiendeleza, huwezi ukasoma? Wanasema, -ah, ah, hapana, maisha magumu.

> Kwanza nitapata wapi hiyo ada ya kulipia? Wakiona hiyo 'lampsome ya kulipa' [shillingi 120, 000] wanakata tamaa kwani wanaona ni hela nyingi kuzipata wao wenyewe.
> (In the village, women have forgotten completely about developing themselves. But, there are many of them with very good qualifications, the majority being teachers. But, whenever you ask them, what do you think --, Would you like to develop yourself by enrolling with the OUT studies? They say, "Ah, ah, no, life is difficult. First, how do I get the tuition fees? So, when they see the lump sum of Ts120, 000 to be paid, they get completely discouraged because they think it is a lot of money for them that they cannot afford).

She commented that these women, if they had someone to sensitize, encourage, and support them, could study with the OUT. The way the life in the village has affected them and makes it very hard for them, even those with very good diplomas as teachers, to actually live the typical village life without even the ability to sustain their basic needs in life any more. However, she said that, since these teachers with good diplomas are employed, and can get better money than the people surrounding them, they consider themselves very educated compared to the others, and do not even see any more the need for them to struggle for university education, particularly when they consider that they have to go for their examinations in the regional centres, paying money, sleep in guest houses, and eat in hotels, they see that they cannot afford the costs of that type of education at all, and after all, as women they will not be able to get the better jobs anyway. So they figure out that the education is really not meant for them, so they do not even attempt to plan for it.

Socio-cultural Barriers

Tanzania is a multi-cultural country based on about 120 tribal communities that are organized into basically three major distinct social cultural groups. While the culture in each case is patriarchial, the disbursement of land from one generation to the next follows these three distinct traditions. The dominant group is patrilineal, where the head of the family normally falls to the first-born son of each family unit. In the patrilineal groups all property is owned by the male clan, and is entrusted to the male members, and the first son in each family is usually in charge of all property in the family unit. The second group is matrilineal, where the wife's brother (the children's uncle) assumes

responsibility for the care of the family, and the third is the neutral sex-bias group, where the wife's uncle (known as the grandpa-uncle of the children) assumes the rite of succession. The matrilineal and neutral sex-bias groups, usually all members of the family unit share the family property. An extensive part of southern Tanzania is mainly matrilineal, but the dominant social cultural group for Tanzanians is patrilineal. However, although Tanzanian people have no tribal conflicts, culturally Tanzanians people are strongly grounded in their tribal cultures, especially on the basis of sex-roles, ownership of property, and on different aspects of life values including what counts as necessary to be accepted as normal human beings in their tribal group culture.

The socio-cultural context of women's lives in Tanzania places many constraints on women's involvement with the OUT. Within their descriptions, interviewees mentioned the strong cultural expectations for women around early marriage and child rearing, the lack of societal support for girls' education, the marginalization of women's concerns as "women-only" issues, and the control of women's lives by men and society in general.

Poor educational background

A number of OUT officials mentioned that women applicants do not have a good academic background, especially in the sciences. Much of this was blamed on poor secondary schooling although other interviewees discussed the lack of appropriate socialization which hampers girls in competing academically with boys.

A lecturer in biological sciences explained that women more often than men experience difficulties in achieving well in academic studies, particularly the sciences. She said that while the society has a mythical belief that women are naturally not good in academic work, particularly science studies, the reality is that girls find science and academic studies difficult mainly because of their school background. She claimed that many all girls' secondary schools have fewer qualified teachers and appropriate teaching facilities than are in all boys' secondary schools. She maintained that some of the good teachers, particularly the science teachers, who are usually males are not commonly posted to many of the all girls' secondary schools.

During 1997 and 1998 she had a chance to interview some girls from several all girls' secondary schools normally considered among the best girls' secondary schools in

the country, and found out that there were no degree qualified science teachers in those schools. She complained that it means that these students would have a very bad science background and since most girls are selected from these schools to come to university they don't get on very well with the science studies and their academic work in general. She explained also that she has also had a chance to compare girls' and boys' performance in her class at her university, and found out that the performance of the girls and the boys in the science subjects was not really different.

Another woman lecturer from a conventional university observed that many females are shy, and or think it is not proper to challenge issues with males, and as such are reluctant to enter into debates or class-discussion. She claimed that she found this in her classes at her university, where many female students explained that it was their first time to enter into arguments with males. She alleged similar reasons affect many female students who opt not to continue their studies to university education as they lack the confidence to cope. She supposed this notion is carried over even to the OUT programs, although they are independent studies.

Cultural expectations for girls and women

A second year education student explained that she perceived that many other women do not enroll with the OUT because as she put it in Kiswahili "hawajahamasishwa", they have not been sensitized. She explained that such women continue to hold on the "traditional" view that university education is not really for women, especially if they are married and with children for their major role is to care for children and the family members in a marriage.

A fourth year education student explained that whenever she tried to encourage other women to enroll with the OUT they told her that it is not possible for them as married women because their husbands, other members in their families and communities would not understand them. They told her that she could enroll because she was not married.

In a similar situation, a fourth year student perceived that many married women do not want to enroll with university education because they believe that it will be contradicting expectations of their married roles in society, and will be creating conflicts in marriage with their spouses. She said that being married and studying would

overburden a woman too much for she already has many tasks to do in her life. She reported stories of women she had tried to encourage, but they turned her concerns down with very strong negative expressions and attitude saying "mimi nilishaolewa, nikasome nini tena, … ili iweje?" (I am already married, why should I again go for studies? … what will it help?) When she tells other women that she is studying they get very surprised and they respond such as - 'wewe unasoma na umri huo, na uzee huo unataka iweje? (you are studying at that age, at that age what do you want?) These women still see their major task in their society as to care for their families.

An experienced male regional director explained that the majority of women lack conscientization, sensitization, encouragement, and provision of their basic rights to education right from their early childhood. He said that women are oriented differently in that they have been made to believe marriage, child bearing and child rearing are the most respectable roles for them in society. His personal observations indicated that this is due to the inheritance from past generations. He explained that, in many of the African societies, the wives have not often been more educated than their husbands, so this continues to repeat itself year after year.

One interviewee stated:

> Perhaps the first thing that I have observed is culture and tradition; especially for the nomadic herding communities. They feel that to educate a girl child is to destroy her traditional values. For instance, people such as those of X and X areas have very few girls' children going to school because very few parents can accept that their girls go to school except for the few who are growing up in modernized areas such as the towns.

She said that some other tribes use girls as capital investment ("kitega uchumu"), that when girls get married dowry is paid therefore increasing the parent's heads of cows, but when they are educated parents do not get the cows. On inquiring whether parents do not see that educated daughters are worth more than the non-educated ones in their society, she replied saying that when girls are educated their communities feel that they lose their quality for marriage (marriability) ("anapoteza thamani yake ya uolewaji"), and even if she gets married probably she will not get groomed for the marriage therefore the dowry will not be paid for they only look for the modern practices (modernity), and ignore the traditions, particularly the dowry.

She also explained that religious reasons, especially in the rural areas, and in particular fanatic religious practitioners, have prevented many girls from going to school because of the type of exposures of girls in the schools. For example, she pointed out that the requirement for having common school uniforms, such as a skirt and blouse for girls exposes other parts of the body to public, which is not considered appropriate in some religious practices. She cited examples saying that places like X, where she once taught, the religious community demanded the schools to allow their girls dress up in the proper religious manner, but the school refused to allow that. However, in X town, the X Primary School is X religious school and girls can dress the way the religion requires. For at least one student, marrying early while it disturbed her studies did not diminish her motivation. A second year OUT student, she was at the time of my research a dormant student due to her third baby's pregnancy and delivery. She told me that she enrolled with the OUT because she very much wanted to achieve her degree studies.

When she was doing her grade 13 in Jangwani girls' secondary school she got pregnant to her present husband. This man (now her husband), had promised that he would allow her complete her "A" level studies in a private secondary school if she agreed to marry him. She accepted the marriage, after which she completed her "A" level secondary studies as a married woman in Dar-Es-Salaam private secondary schools. Although the husband honored his promise, because she was married she could not compete for enrollment with the conventional universities like Dar-Es-Salaam and Sokoine and so wanted to complete her degree through the OUT. She learned after her marriage that her husband had permission from her father to marry her regardless of still being in school, probably because the man was their very close neighbor at home, and is a very rich man.

Although she was trying to do her degree studies through the OUT, it has been difficult because she has given birth to three children in a period of four years including completion of her "A" level secondary education. Just before she was pregnant with the third baby, her husband asked her sell in one of his big hardware stores in the town. However, she said that since she was doing her first year studies then, she decided to hire a girl to help her sell in the shop, while she could sit in the store backyard to study as she supervised the girl and helped her to do the sales. She thought the third baby was

intentional from her husband, as a means of preventing her from coping with the OUT studies for he only has grade twelve education. She then exclaimed with confidence saying "But, I am determined to do my degree. I will start studying hard again immediately I am through with the delivery stress."

The acute shortage of girls' access to university education in Tanzania even in the conventional universities prompted the University of Dar-Es-Salaam to initiate a "university pre-entry program" for girls. The coordinator reported that the girls studied well and gained high grades in the one month university pre-program, and are doing very well in their university studies while they couldn't pass well their high school exams. She believed that there must be something real wrong in form five and six study program for the girls because many pass with first divisions in form four. This suggests that it is possible for girls to succeed in university if they have support and appropriate study conditions. I managed to meet five girls who were enrolled under the pre-entry program, I learned that each of these girls had been pregnant at some stage in their secondary education, and that their mothers were helping them with care of the children as they continued with their education. For all five girls, their mothers are divorced or single parents well employed and making a good salary so they could make the decision to assist their daughters to continue with their education while they could support their own families and their daughter's baby. Of the five students, three are top students in their years, one is in the top five students and one is average. It was very encouraging that if girls can be helped to access and be retained in school, they can make full use of their intellectual abilities.

A male founding senior officer at the OUT explained his perceptions of why many women are not aggressive in studying university education. He pointed out that the tribal cultures in each of the tribes in the country have oppressed their women so much that the women do not get the courage, and are not encouraged to attempt to enroll with higher learning studies:

> But in Tanzania women are not encouraged. Probably we have to find the way of not forcing them, but encouraging them because distance education is the only opportunity that can make them [women] learn, otherwise there is no other method.

He believed that women needed encouragement to do their higher studies:

> Taking the relationships in the family what we could say to our many traditions in Tanzania is that we have several tribes, and each tribe has got its own traditions, but as a whole in general women are not being encouraged in each of the tribes because they are always being seen as inferior to the men and are always bowing down to men to marry them, --- this way those who got a chance to achieve the diploma in education, or what ever other level they stop at, they probably think that is their end.

He suggested that not only are women thought to be inferior in many of our tribal cultures because it is part of the traditional culture to consider them so, but that this has been the case in several places (homes, offices, many public places) for many years and that if one went to many parts of the country one could see openly how badly women are being treated by many men of all kinds, especially as husbands, employers, fathers, brothers and also on TV, newspapers and in many social activities in each of the tribe communities in the country.

He recognized that the OUT has no powers to tell the parents and the society to educate the girl children equally to the boy children, or for husbands to encourage their wives to take OUT courses and pay their fees or to force the government to provide for women, rights to equal education in the country. But, he suggested that the OUT continue to encourage women who enroll through making them more aware of the OUT's existence, and to provide help through financial assistance available from sympathetic donors. He strongly suggested that the government help free women from the traditional oppression by men, assist the OUT by providing all women with full government bursaries, and offer more women better jobs, and those who have succeeded in getting one degree to go abroad for instance for more higher studies so that other women will be sensitized, motivated, and encouraged to study for their degrees so that they too may one day get the chance to go abroad to study for their higher degrees as most men can do.

Women only issues

Women indicated that most women have too many roles in the family and society which limit them from enrolling at the OUT and that these are perceived as "women only" issues.

One achieving (Ph.D.) educationist woman explained that in Tanzania the society, particularly men usually encourage, and to a large extent subtly force women to get married soon after they are 18 years. She perceived that usually men prefer early

marriage for girls because most men deliberately want to ensure that whatever plans they make with their lives they have the women with them to deliver and care for offspring. She said that men know that in order to have offspring they need women, but for men to have the offspring is one thing, and to take the responsibility to care for the offspring is quite another thing. Most men normally expect, and are brought up to believe, that care of offspring is a woman role alone. While they much appreciate and are proud to have the offspring, as such, whatever men do in society, they will always make sure that they have the women around, and ensure that the women are always "available" to take care of the offspring, as a man will never think of another male taking care of his offspring, but a woman, and this woman can be his wife, his mother, his aunt, his sister, his daughter, or even his grandmother are all expected to do so.

A student explained that many women have too many roles (farming; house chores; children, family, property care) that occupy their mind, time and energy compared to men. Men do only "specific" tasks ("shughuli maalumu') such as getting the family house; employment or business to earn money, and so they afford time and energy to think and concentrate on planning other things for their lives such as education. She lamented that the traditional husband-wife relationship in marriage has made many men believe that naturally women are born to handle multi role duties in the society, and take care of children and husbands. They should not have much time to think of other things such as academic studies especially when they are married and have children.

She observed that the level of education of many wives of rich business men is very low, but the wives are not taking any trouble to educate them selves further although money would not be their real problem. Many wives consider that if they fight for their right to get more educated, their husbands will abandon them and marry other women willing to remain home and do the family work. After all what they are looking for is good family life which their husbands are already providing them with despite their little education. She lamented that what most husbands really like to see from their wives is to give birth, raise children, ensure the house and compound are clean, and well decorated with flowers, embroidered clothes and perfumes; and herself beautifully dressed, nicely made hair, looking fresh and in good mood; and the children well taken care of, so that when he comes home his family look luxurious for him to feel comfortable. Delighted,

his heart is filled with joy and sweet pleasures "...baba akija ndani anapata moyo" and he will prefer to stay home not go out with other women. She lamented, "this is the main trend of traditions in what marriage relationships are for in many Tanzanian people." She said:

> A woman therefore goes to the market, returns home, will work on the farm, the family economic projects and all other tasks in her house and for her family, but never complain or compete with or challenge her husband in any way.

She explained that in this way many roles in the family and society have become traditionally "a woman's responsibility only," and most women accept this as their ideal life in the family and society, while most men expect, believe and demand that their wives assumes that kind of life in upon marriage. Many men expect their wives to assume these marriage traditions because that makes the man be accepted by the society as a "man" among other "men," -"mwanamme kama wanaume wengine." Also many wives are willing to accept these traditions because that way the society accepts them as a "woman" among other "women" in the society. She noted that this way the traditions manage to be extended from one generation to the other.

A non-student did not see the situation changing easily. Women alone, she said, can do nothing about the way they get treated in the society and families for it is embedded in the culture, traditions and the religions found in the society. She believed that only the society itself can initiate the required change, because it needs the changes to start from "above", - from the government, manybe by the President stating this to the men. This way the men can understand.

She elaborated that if we were to take the society to be like a family with the father, the mother and their children, if there is something being done wrongly by the children in that family, it means that it is the responsibility of the father and the mother, to take a stand to rectify the problem from the children. So, she explained that if we take the Tanzanian society, the President as head of the nation, the President has to state something [policy] about the women education problem and the way men and the society in general consider women. She explained that it is after the President has stated something that the men will understand that they [men] and their families must change because there is an order from above [the government], and the institutions, like a mother will then carry out the appropriate practice. But, also, she said, after the President has

declared the stand, still it is very difficult for the culture and traditions in practice to stop immediately as they are embedded in the culture. However, she explained that we could say that there are the local leaders to supervise the President's order, but she said that these local leaders themselves are usually men, who are embedded within the culture and traditions and therefore cannot supervise. She lamented saying that probably this is where the problem lies, and to change the women's oppression might have to take a very long time as she explained earlier. She noted however that if the government tries hard to ensure that women can get good education they can then take care of their own other problems.

During my field study I came across a typical woman multi-role situation. I met a third year home economics student in one region. I had known this woman earlier in Dar-Es-Salaam, but did not know that she had moved away and that she was studying with the OUT. Other women students in her region informed me that they knew of such a woman and the institution she worked for, but that they were no longer seeing her at the regional activities. I met her at about 6.45 a.m. in the morning outside her home. Still in her nightdress, she was holding a long stick and taking her herd of five black and white milk cows out to graze. At first she was shy and she still pushed her cows to go as if she did not see me. I greeted her by the name of her first child "Good morning, mama X"; she replied "Good morning, mama Mhehe," and she quickly inquired, "What have you come to do here so early in the morning?" I told her that I was looking for her because I am doing a research study to find out how we can help women who are studying, or want to study with the OUT. With this statement, she brightened up and felt much more relaxed with my visit and she invited me home after settling with her cows.

In her house, there were two little girls less than five years old, each still in their night pajamas. Her own mother was seated on a small stool by the door to the kitchen, and there was nobody else, no house helper or husband. The house did not look very well taken care of. In their small living room, there were lots (more than twenty) of broken old TV sets full of rust and dust, some completely opened up and spread out on the floor and couches, some semi-opened, and many (more than ten of them) still intact. I was first startled by the living room situation getting so piled up with these old scraps of TV sets. When I inquired what do they do with all those old TVs, she replied:

> Those are my husband's projects. That is how he keeps himself busy after he comes from work. He teaches physics in a technical secondary school in X town, so he sometimes repairs electronic gadgets for his friends and they pay him some money. I have been really worried for him keeping so many of them in the living room, especially with the children around. There is no room for anybody to sit down and the children to play. For him he has no problem for he is never at home, and whenever he is home he just works on them.

I asked her how her schooling was going. She explained that she has stopped going for more than a year because, first she could not afford the money to go for the science practical sessions which were held at Sokoine University in Morogoro. The first time she went for the two weeks she used about Ts. 60,000, and this was not even enough because several times she could not afford all the daily meals as she continued with the practical for the two weeks. She also explained that before she left she had to dispense Ts. 40,000 for the children to use at home while she was away. But, on returning home she found that her husband took the money away from the children three days after she left. The children survived only through the help provided by her neighbor whom she had asked to help keep watch on her family while she was away. This she said made her fear to leave her home again especially since she had the cows which he might sell if she is away.

Then she explained the home situation. This she said that her husband for more than five years now has not been helping with anything in the family. This she told me is what made her leave her teaching job at a secondary school in Dar-Es-Salaam for the new job at X Institute in a remote place. She hoped it would help her keep away from the husband's interference in her efforts to support the children. She said as a Christian woman, official divorce has not been easy for her to obtain. She lamented that unfortunately the husband also decided to join her and got another teaching job through the help of his elder brother. She further informed me that while they have five children her husband has three children outside their marriage from two different women since they got married. She complained that often these children come to her home to ask for money from their father. She has been asking them not to come to her house, something she thinks upsets the husband even more because usually traditions allows him as husband to do anything without his wives' consent.

She explained that her husband normally leaves the house about 6.00 a.m. in the morning every working day to catch a bus to the town where he teaches in a private

Secondary School. He may come back any time he wishes, sometimes spending nights at his brother's house or with the other women. On weekends if he is home he usually gets busy working with the TV business repairing them. She said her routine has been that in the morning she milks the cows about 5.00 a.m. before she can take them to grazing grounds on campus around 6.30 a.m. After that she has to get the milk to three neighboring houses where she has customers since the elder three children (two girls and a boy) who could help her went to boarding school, the only choice from her remote environment. From there she has to get the little girls dressed up, fed and dropped to the nursery school nearby belonging to the institute. "Thanks it is available, although it is not a very good one, but it helps me find a place to keep the children playing for the day," she commented, then continued to explain that she attends to her sick mother getting her breakfast, giving her the medication dose for the morning, and finally makes the beds if time allows her, and then go to her office work by 8.00 a.m. When I asked her how she can manage all these tasks by herself, she replied that she usually wakes up around 4.30 a.m. every day, and at lunch hour too she has to make a similar routine, get the cows and the children back home and see that everybody gets something to eat for lunch. I then inquired what would she do now with her studies. She replied sadly saying, "God knows mama Mhehe, I cannot leave my children suffering so much and concentrate on studies."

A non-student (1999) stated:

> I think women fail when they consider that first they have to take care of the children, take care of the husband, and take care of the house then they feel that they will not get the time to study.

I probed her, what she meant by "taking care of the husband" ("kuhudumia mume una maana gani"), she was very surprised that I was asking her an obvious question while I am a Tanzania married woman and I should know. She answered me with great astonishment:

> O.K., to take care of a husband involves cooking for him, washing his clothes and loving him. I need to cook for him, wash for him. He needs to be loved and be as close as possible as he married you for that. You have to be very close to him all the time. But if you will be concentrating on studies you might be derailed away by the concentration of the studies. And if you are derailed away, it is possible he may decide to go out with other women because your closeness has moved away from him.

I probed again, "but how come men can go away for a long time in search of employment and or studies abroad for many years leaving their wives and families behind and expect to come back to their wives?" She explained that traditionally it is acceptable that men are free to do anything they wish without informing their wives, but this is not the same for women. This is how men can get married to two, three or even more women without consulting their wives; similarly they can go for studies without caring whether this will affect the wife or not as that is not the man's concern. Also, for a woman, society, religious teachings and traditions demand that a woman must seek her husband's consent before doing anything, and if he thinks that will affect him or the family, he has the power to refuse her permission. A woman is supposed to obey her husband as that is what God created women for, its in the Bible and the "Koroani," if he does not allow her permission, for by tradition a man is always above the women and has the final say.

A male founding senior OUT administrator, and a senior female administrator in different situations termed the process under which a man leaves the whole family responsibility to his wife as *cultural oppression* and not because the women are less educated than the men. The woman senior administrator said that the practice is one where men marginalize the women, and consider and treat them as their subordinates in the society. Even the well employed women, such as teachers and nurses, find that they cannot afford to pay for their own education costs after they are married no matter how small the fees may be because many husbands, particularly those with well educated and employed wives, never give any money to their families. She explained that such fathers usually tell their children, "Go ask your mother," whenever their children ask them for any provisions. This, she explained, is why men can decide to abandon their families when they are attracted more by other personal interests in life such as their personal education/job development or another woman. This is why we see many men coming to study with the OUT, because after marriage the first thing they want to do is to struggle to have higher status in the family, and so they keep all their money for their own development and expect the wives to spend their money for family care.

She also explained that most other men who are not doing studies often go drinking with friends after working hours to socialize and relax. This is the major reason

many men do not go home immediately after office hours as women do to take care of their families after they are married. She said, this is why we find for most married women, whatever grade level they acquire before marriage, after they get married they cannot be thinking of anything else except helping out their families. She said that this has also been seen by the society to be the right thing for a married woman to be doing, - "struggling to provide for her family" under whatever circumstances a man may choose for her.

She explained that a married woman usually cannot complain because it is considered as part of the tradition, and men who try to stay home, who do not go out to meet with other men in the bars or public places are normally considered somehow abnormal, and are usually laughed at by other men, and society too. They are looked down upon by their own family members, and are considered dominated by their wives (something which the culture rejects). She explained that with such understanding, many women in Tanzania are compelled to continue with their family care tasks throughout their lives never complaining, or thinking of challenging their husbands, or finding time to seek for other better alternative ways for developing themselves. Several similar views were raised by other respondents in different situations.

Part of the reason for woman's continued oppression was due to a lack of information about alternative choices and a lack of support to make such choices. She maintained that a woman has nobody (in her own family, her husband's family, her in-laws, the society, the church, the school, the government and even her women friends) persuading her to change her beliefs of the traditions in marriage, and or try to look for better alternatives. She complained that although there are women groups (NGOs, political, religious, social clubs, some capable relatives, etc) in many places of the country, they are not supposed to help women (as wives) learn how to develop themselves beyond the traditional cultural requirements.

She said that this is why even the government has not attempted to help women to change. She stated, there is "no law protecting women from oppression in marriage" from their traditional ways of married life, also the government is reluctant to do anything to prevent many obvious women's sufferings observed in the society, particularly after they get married. She lamented that as a social worker she has not seen any law that helps a

married woman hold her husband responsible if he does not provide for his family. She perceives that the government probably feels that to hold a man responsible for the way he treats his wife and family it is like interfering with peoples' marriages, especially when most people holding the high positions of government are also men with the same attitudes and practices. Many similar expressions came from many of the other women respondents.

A senior student in law explained that men leave their wives with too many roles in the family. By the tradition many men usually demand that if the wife is employed she gives all her salary to him so that he plans and budgets all the family needs, or the wife should obtain his consent (so that he knows) for whatever she can spend her salary on. She reported that it is when the man takes the wife's salary that he normally can decide to buy clothing for the family, pay the school fees, buy food for the family or give the wife the money he thinks is enough for the family food. That is his responsibility, together with her to control and manage the family affairs. She said that if the wife does not give her salary to the husband usually he will not provide for anything for the family, and he will demand that the wife be responsible to provide the family using her salary, while he can spend his money the way he likes and without explaining to his wife: She lamented:

> Usipompa, majukumu mengi yatakulemea wewe kiasi ambacho hata hela zako hazitatosha kumudu mahitaji yote ya familia kwa vile itabidi ununue chakula, nguo zako mwenyewe na za watoto, na hata kuwalipia ada ya shule na uniform, vyote atakuachia. Kwa hiyo ni heri tu ukampa hiyo hela, kwa maana usipompa, kila kitu ukimwambia anakuambia "na wewe una hela.
>
> If you do not give him the salary he will leave every responsibility of the family upon you to the extent that even your salary will not be enough to cover all the needs for the family for you will have to buy food, your own clothes and for the children pay their school fees, and buy their uniforms, all these he will leave them on you. So, it is better you give him the money, for if you do not give him the money, any thing you ask him to provide for the family, he will say "you also have money.

The student explained that in this way the major role of the husband in the family as she perceived it, was actually being a husband, to protect and control (manage) the family, because after he pays the dowry and marries the wife, he has completed his obligation and can be allowed to control his family. The wife is responsible to take care of the whole family including the husband. This is why you find that, by tradition,

women do everything in the family but the husband is credited for whatever happens in his family because the wife is supposed to be doing everything in his name.

Lack of support for girls' education

In discussing the socio-cultural context of girl's lives, a woman lecturer brought many of these points together. She explained that, there are many, multiple and complex constraints from many different sources limiting many girls from achieving their university education beginning right from childhood.

First many women do not aim high academically, economically and in general life development because they lack sensitization, motivation, and encouragement right from their early life upbringing. She explained that their fathers usually do not decide to enroll them for schooling and encourage them as they do for the boys. She said, in Tanzania educating a child is an investment, as such many fathers do not like investing in girls' education because they feel this is transferring money to other people's families because when girls get married they move to their husband's families, who by tradition and law are empowered to control the lives of wives. She pointed out that by tradition a woman is not supposed to own a home, and that through the cultural traditions many girls are brought up to think marriage is the only way that they can own any kind of property including their own children. Many girls if they finish primary education, or form four and get married immediately think they have made it, and if they go on to form six and get a diploma that is already too much and is not really necessary for them as they can get married. Hence, the majority of Tanzanian girls do not really consider university education to be of much importance to their lives compared to their male counterparts.

Second, adolescence socialization ("unyago/jando") is done by elder female and male relatives, who are entrusted by the traditional cultures to orient girls and boys in their communities to the way men want their women to be. She explained that, the little education for the mothers and all the female relatives make them not able to fight such traditions or to encourage girls to aspire for different goals than what the traditions in their communities dictate. The personal capabilities in girls really never get the chance to be developed. She said, although many boys go through similar traditional orientations ("jando"), for them they already have a father and other male relatives who hold high aspirations for educational development as an investment in their lives regardless of the

traditional background experiences. This leads girls in the society into a different "traditional vicious circle" of life. This, she explained, was the reason we get in the society many educated men, but still they practice a lot of the traditions over family lives.

Third, men groom girls at a too young an age for marriage and turn them to just wives, mothers and caretakers of their families, --actually "house maids." Sometimes, they just use them for sex, make them pregnant, and cause them to get expelled from school before the girls' parents can have the chance to educate them as is usually done for the majority of boys in the society. She pointed out that usually many boys get several chances to repeat classes when they fail to make it for the first time, and for many several times, but rarely is the same chance done for daughters who fail to perform at the first time. This is why often in Tanzania you can find boys who are already 26 years, but enrolling for university education right from normal high school, but usually the same does not happen for most girls. Boys normally get more encouragement to aspire for better education than are girls.

Fourth, many girls due to their traditional roles to help mothers take care of families are busy everyday after school hours with the housework and childcare. They do not get enough time to study well and sometimes they are too tired to attend the next day's classes. In comparison, after school, boys normally are left to just play around and have ample time to do their homework and relax. Hence, in examinations, most girls usually do not perform as well as boys and so may not be able to enroll for their next level of education. Such situations have been exacerbated by the government encouraging more day secondary schools rather than boarding secondary schools where girls were able to stay and avoid the housework and could do better in their studies. She explained that the fact some mothers are also employed has made the situation for the girls worse. Their mothers need them to help them with the housework (not the boys for their fathers and the male relatives do not like to see that happen) because the mothers find that after office hours they do not get enough time and energy to do all the house tasks alone, as such they delegate much of the work to be done by their daughters to help them, as well as to learn skills necessary for girls when they become adult women. As such, she noted that, Tanzania today has a big category of girls, who do not aim high in education due to lack of encouragement from their parents, the government, the training institutions and

the society in general. She blamed the education system and the education policy makers and planners for the situation of girls' and women's education in the country saying that:

> I am even worried of the so called "school inspectors," or inspectors at the Ministry of Education. I may be right or wrong, but these are my personal views that, I really don't think the Ministry of Education nowadays cares anymore, because I cannot see how anybody can sit there and call himself/herself "a Minister of Education," or "a Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Education," or "a Director of say Secondary or Primary Education, but sit there in Dar-Es-Salaam, drive big government cars and leave the problems that are happening in schools today, while the children are asked to pay cost –sharing over Ts60, 000, to run the schools, and which the majority of the parents cannot afford and so decide to marginalize the girls.

Another OUT woman educationist also commented that women have not been supported, or encouraged to go to school by their families, the society, the government, in their marriages, and in the teaching institutions themselves. She complained saying that, to date, in many post secondary educational institutions there are no women convenient structures such as child care facilities for nursing mothers and those with little children.

A non-student professional secretary woman explained that most of her observations showed that if a parent is not capable of supporting a child's educational needs, and if this child is a girl, then she may despair completely, and may even decide to get married early even when she is very intelligent in school. She said, as for the boys, if a boy is really motivated to study, his chances are much better than those for the girl. If the boy's father is not capable of funding his education, some boys often can explain to their uncles (or any other extended member of the family) carefully and understandably their father's financial limitations, and often these extended members of the family are usually more ready to support a boy child who goes to them with such requests than when a girl child asks the same, for often these extended family parents consider that it is the father alone who has final say of his own daughters' educational needs, and that when the girl child gets married she will be removed from her biological father and she becomes the property of the family where she is married. Therefore, she explained that when a girl-child's father fails to support his own daughter's education, the girl usually knows right away that it is the end of her getting education and usually for the rest of her life. This is the reality for most Tanzanian girls by traditions, rarely extended family members

may help with the education for girls, at most they use them as house helpers and later may provide trivial secretarial training skills etc.

She explained that normally most girls do not try to develop their other potential in life before they get marriage, because the way young girls think and perceive when they see a married woman, especially those married in rich families they believe that if they get married, and are lucky to get into a rich family, then they will become part of sharing the family richness, as they believe by getting married they become equal members of that family. But, she explained that the girls do not perceive that in reality by most traditions in Tanzania all family property is actually owned by the male members of the family and clan. Also, she said that many girls fail due to their very young age and lack of experience to make critical analysis of most married women's lives as she sees them marrying very rich families while they come from poor families, and they normally do not have sustainable employment of their own, and they do not really have rights to access the wealth of the families they get married to. She said, the girls cannot understand that such women get oppresses in certain ways when they are not part of the creation of that property, and that this contributes a lot of women ageing, and sometimes women at their 30s may look as old as 50 years of age due to such oppressions in marriage, but the reality is, if she had her own employment she would not feel so oppressed.

A non-student woman complained about the existing situation of young school-girls in Tanzania saying that at present, most secondary school girls are harassed by men, who whenever they see a beautiful girl that they like they often can just use her; even if she is still in school they do not really care at all. She said, most men just seduce and drag a young girls' attention away from her studies by putting up so many temptations until the girl is willing to abscond her studies to get married. She said that often they just use them for sex partner making her pregnant which leads to her being expelled from school.

She lamented that since there is no law protecting girls from getting married after they complete their primary school education, and that even the law applying for the protection of primary school girls is not really observed, it has given much freedom to men, usually married men with big money, who are afraid of contacting AIDS from adult women, or are refused by adult women decide to use young school girls because these are too young to understand the problem and often have problems getting sufficient school

needs as boys usually get from their fathers. She complained that this has contributed much to discouraging most parents willing to educated their daughters from choosing to educate them, and especially beyond grade 12. She complained that this makes many intelligent girls get removed from school before they can get to their university education, while the men, and or parents who do that are not held responsible by any law. The girl's parents willing to educate their daughters cannot do anything to prevent their daughters from been removed from school by some interested males. She reported that some girls' secondary schools in big towns have been reported with cases where out of 20 girls between grades 9 to 12, who were selected randomly and were tested for HIV, only 2 were found to be HIV negative, while there are known cases where school teachers, and or principal have been cooperative, or sell the girls to big government bosses to get their own promotions.

A woman administrator argued that she did not see any valid reason why the girls should just be expelled from the national school system when the men are never even held responsible, but cheat young girls from school, taking the advantage of their immaturity, and or hardship circumstances, and inadequate protection in the society and make them pregnant. She considers this a "circumstantial victimization" of girls and women development in the society because the boys/men are never held responsible even where they are clearly well identified. In addition, when the illegitimate children are seven years of age (even at younger age), the men are allowed by traditions/law to take away these children from their mothers regardless of care for the child, and compensation for the girls' wasted education and life. This makes the woman a double loser by the circumstances that the society puts on such young girls' shoulders alone.

Another educationist woman participant raised several concerns on the issue of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy asking, "What does the government really gain by pushing out of school forever an intelligent girl just because she got pregnant, while many pregnant women are everywhere doing all kinds of jobs in the society?" and, "How does the government and society expect this young girl to support her future life and that of the child especially that it is traditionally known that most fathers do not support care to their pregnant girls or their children?" She argued that other proper means of handling the issue, and a more supportive approach could be determined by the

authorities, for most of the school administrators know the culture that parents from both sides would naturally not support the girl much, and the girls are too young to find any useful survival means on their own. She questioned, "why when other kinds of misconduct is done by children of both sexes the families have tolerable means to counsel and guide them until they can learn better? Why pregnancy issue alone is left to the girl alone to handle?

She said that it is very important that schools help girls develop their talents. She blamed the present school system, saying that the schools do not develop girls at all, and this has resulted in many girls growing up without their talents; thus many women as adults cannot confront their own life issues successfully. She complained saying that:

> In may opinion really, the constraints for women education development are very much frustrating and the fact that women don't have homes to start with (that is their parents naturally do not invest in them, and when they get married they are not supposed to be developed for other things than to be a wife, a mother, and a caretaker of her family), they do not usually grow up to develop easily. So, for many women education development problem, you will find a lot of reasons, and multiple complex reasons, not just one reason.

She explained threatening school-life experiences that many Tanzanian secondary school girls experience collected from oral reporting done by secondary school girls in festivals known as "Tuseme" (meaning "Let us tell") normally conducted each year to help girls speak out their difficult experiences. She complained that the education system in Tanzania has really collapsed and that it has lots of problems, such as infrastructure, school management, feeding system and what not affecting all students, but the girls are more adversely affected.

She also noted that the government now has a policy on building boarding schools. It does not concentrate on building boarding schools any more because they think it is more expensive and provides less access for student populations in school. But, she complained that while the government thinks it is cost saving measure to have more day schools, it must be emphasize that day schools may be good in terms of expanding access, but are not very ideal institutions for Tanzanian girls where the traditional cultures bind girls to participate more than boys in the many house chores, thus limiting their academic performance, and the vulnerable unprotected circumstances

and environments that girl as day scholars have to cope with. She strongly suggested that girls must be taken away from the household chores and circumstantial victimization in the society in order that they are give the chance to compete well with their boy counterparts.

She further noted that girls must be taken away from harassment generally done to women as subservient members of the society by culture, and even more seriously, girls must be protected from the general male harassment like those observed in the co-educational schools in Dar-Es-Salaam and the many city buses. She complained that the harassment that girls go through in public and their homes as second-class people, the sexual harassment they go through on their way to and from school every day is a very big burden on their mind as young people (children) and robs them of their self-esteem, and determination to effectively concentrate on their daily school work. She elaborated this saying that you can imagine a 14 to 17 year old girl, for four years from form one to four, leaving her home early morning and have to go through all this harassment each day from her home to school, and from school back home in the evening; and then she has to cope with studies at school the whole day from 8.00 am to 5.30 pm; and then she has at home to do the housework chores in the morning, such as prepare breakfast for the family, get ready young siblings for pre-school, some even milk the cows to get the milk for the breakfast; and in the evenings they fetch water and firewood, cook supper, milk the cows again, feed, bath and put to bed their siblings before they can write their homework assignments. She lamented that this kind of life cycle per day for a young girl child is a very big issue and worth the government reviewing its education system in relation to educating girls and women.

She claimed to see traditions and cultural practices limiting women from effective education development to be "stupid practices" because she believes that any intelligent person understands well the importance of good education for any person's development. She added that if each Tanzanian could *respect* well the cost their own mothers have put in bringing them up, they would appreciate the cost demanded to educate a woman better. She noted that often in society many people blame mothers when a child is under achieving, but forget the society's responsibility to educate the mother better. Too often mothers have been left to act on their own intuition in child upbringing, never paid, and

never appreciated for what they do to sustain society's development, but considered backward and stupid to have been what they are, particularly accepting to get married and become mothers subservient to their husbands demands throughout life. However, she noted that without that which women have voluntarily accepted to be, there would be no *peace*, and or *development* for many humankind societies. She again commended the efforts that Tanzania, under the First President of the nation, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere made ten years ago to make education free at all levels, with quite a number of boarding schools for protecting the girls and generally children from lots of other societal destruction to enable many girls achieve good education. She claims that for now the tuition fees, the cultural practices, and the day schools, are preventing majority of women from participating in education development effectively.

Further more, she complained that she has been disgusted yet by other two practices taking place in the secondary education system in Tanzania today. One was that even where there were day schools, parents from rural areas had to board their girl children in unsafe rented rooms in towns in order to attend the school as day scholars. She complained,

> You can imagine a 14 year old girl from a village renting a room alone in town in order to attend her secondary school education in town. Can you imagine how vulnerable these girls are to the rest of the society sexual assaults, and when you imagine of the HIV magnitude to day and this to happen as part of the school system involving girls? --And worse still is when the same Ministry of Education system is throwing out of school the girls who get pregnant. . . . From the "Tuseme" festivals each year the girls complain that they have been asked to pay Ts. 60,000, or more, depending on whether the school is run by the government or on private basis, day or boarding school, and that is the money the Ministry is asking the heads of schools to use to run the schools per year. So, now the heads of schools have been told by the Ministry of Education that it is up to them to ensure that the schools can run on that money which the students pay, ---"can you imagine Ts. 60,000 or a little bit more to feed a kid for a whole year whether in day or boarding school? This is what is happening in the schools!

She went on to explain that some secondary schools check for fees at the gate and if the child doesn't have sufficient fees for the whole term, then the child is turned away right away at the gate.

> What really happens, now to a new form one girl, 14 or 15 years old who comes to X secondary school near Dar-Es-Salaam, but she is coming from say Mbeya, a whole 12 hours drive by bus to arrive in the school. If the school is turning away a

> girl 14 or 15 years old because she came without any fees, it means she is being turned back without having eaten anything, or very little snacks on the way as she traveled the whole day to come to the school, she is very tired from the long trip travel, she is very new to her school place, and knows nobody. That the girl has to now in that evening to go to the nearest town to her school, or even another one further, or Dar-Es-Salaam itself in order to get transport say the next morning to go back to her home place Mbeya, or to get on some trucks traveling at night.

She complained bitterly saying, " You do not expect this girl, who comes to school without school fees, to have money for her fare to go back to Mbeya in the first place, because if she had the fare to go back to Mbeya she would have paid the fees, so most likely she doesn't have the fare to go back home." This is usually the place where most girls start getting into really problems, particularly considering the kind of parents such girl might have. They might expect that the daughter goes to school first while they try to look for the money/extra money to pay for her tuition. "So, we are looking at a girl child at 14 or 15 years, in a strange place to find her way back home alone and with no money to pay for the transport, hotel rent, or food." She said that this girl will find out that now she has to go to X town to try to hitchhike to go back home. So, this is a 14/15 year old girl, and she is desperate. It may even now be dark and she has no money to pay for a hotel room, food or fare to go back home. So, of course such girls will fall prey of any man showing interest to help her. Such men usually abuse the girls sexually, but help them with the food for the day and fare to go home, or give them a ride in their big lorries to Mbeya or where ever place. So, by the time this girl reaches home she might even be pregnant and may also have other associated problems such as contracting HIV which she will not know by then. Because her father is not going to have the cost sharing money, the girl may never even come back to continue her secondary school education.

She lamented that almost in all schools, secondary and primary schools, whether day or boarding schools, similar things are happening. The school heads are sending back home right from the first day of school all students who come with out the so said cost-sharing money, and all sorts of very strange things are happening to the young girls because of this cost sharing issue and the Ministry of Education knows it is happening.

She also explained that sometimes you find a school without enough food, and the school administration decides that in order that the school may cover the required full term, the children do not get any breakfast, like the first meal for the school is the lunch

which is to be taken at 2.00 pm, and this is in a boarding school where the children have no other means of accessing any kind of food. So, she said, she was complaining to the teachers and the school heads:

> Who stays without eating?" -- Do you stay from morning, or after you have eaten your dinner do you stay without eating until 8.00 pm the next day? --- You as adults, do you stay without eating? --- How do you expect this girl 14/15 years old not to eat anything for such a long time, yet expect that she can study effectively? Really is the fee, -lack of money a good enough reason to keep children so hungry and away from their homes?

She said that is why earlier she said that she doesn't think the Ministry of Education cares any more about the education because she doesn't think what is happening in the schools today has to do with anything like the country being poor because when she went to school she thinks Tanzania was much poorer than it is to day, but she never went hungry the whole day in a boarding school because she was studying. So, she claims that there must be something else basically wrong with the management of the education.

The "Tuseme" Project is still going on and these are the kind of experiences the secondary school girls are telling that they are going through in order to participate in their secondary school education in Tanzania. Simply, the majority of the girls do not achieve their secondary school education, and if they complete, they do not qualify so they are not motivated even if they hear of the OUT chances. Many of them are already down, -she meant sick with the HIV contracted as they were trying to struggle through the secondary school education problems.

One non-student woman explained that it is very difficult for women to do their post-secondary education because the society does not support girls' aspirations for higher education, particularly at university level, because to a greater extent societal traditions demand that girls get married soon after age 18. Therefore, she claimed that the "reception" most girls receive from society for personal determination to pursue university education is negative when compared to what the boys get. She blamed the immediate relatives of the girls, such as, parents, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts; grand parents, neighbors; and even the government and the post-secondary institutions themselves for not readily accepting girls and women when they are determined to enroll with university education.

She pointed out that such negative reception is easily observed from the ways relatives, neighbors, and society at large talk about girl's education achievement, particularly university education, and for the government and the higher institutions themselves is noted from the ways the structures for education are not organized to fit within the girl's/women's needs for higher education. For instance, she reported that in society often one hears many negative comments about girls who strive to gain university education. She cited some of the comments to be like: "Only very ugly girls are left out by men to study at university for no men want to marry them, -they are not beautiful enough to worth any man's love,"--- others say, "only girls with abnormal character [meaning who behave like men] are left to go for university education for they are not good for marriage," --- and still others, a comment very popular with university boys, say, "Ooh, I cannot marry a girl with university education, it is putting two bulls in a house," --- " it will not develop a family/home but a battle field," in Kiswahili words like "haambiliki, wabishi sana, hajui nani mume na nani mke ndani ya nyumba, wana unyodo sana, wanapanda kichwani kwa mume, mume anateseka sana, hawajui kulea watoto, hawalei mume, ndoa haiishi etc", meaning such wives are very argumentative with everything that their husbands tell them or want them do, so this creates problems for marriage to survive/thrive (in the male perspective).

On the other hand, she argued that while the government and the learning institutions themselves know well that university education is for mature people, it has not included in the higher learning institution structures that support most married women services, such as day care and baby sitters service, accommodations, and facilities required by nursing mothers and women with small children. She argued that girls and women find out that in order for them to study for a university education, they have to be studying while they are also struggling against environments that are not conducive for women's natures, lecturers/tutors not sympathetic to women learning difficulties/ problems, and against their parents, relatives, friends, neighbors and general societal wishes and expectations for them. As such, they have to be pushing against strong currents of negative/indifferent attitudes of these people, and study environments and materials that are not fitting for women, or with their women's ambitions, expectations, needs, and circumstances.

She argued that the government and the OUT know what convenient study environments for women should be, and the importance of such environments to women lives, particularly if they are expected to be good role models (as wives and mothers) for younger girls, and or other women to copy and aspire for university education. This, she lamented that makes it that when girls decide to aspire for university education they normally do that at *their own risk*. It means that a girl would be making her decisions to study at university level on her own, without provision of women study structures, and against the strong opposing forces from the people she lives with, respect and love. She claimed this to be very difficult challenge for a young girl alone to handle the situation in order to develop her own self-confidence that she can, and will be able to do her university studies successfully. She claims that the majority of people in the society, even the government really are of the opinion that after secondary education, girls are usually above 18 years and should get married. This causes many girls after they complete their certificate (grade 12) or diploma (grade 14) to find that it is better they get into low cadre professions like teaching and nursing training for a year or two, then get married in order that they avoid the societal opposition, and they can just use their professional knowledge to raise up their children in the society which is more acceptable for them. She also had views that society, particularly at the girl's family level, tend to think it is a waste of time and money for a girl to spend her time getting university education then after marriage she spends much of her time in the family caring for a husband and child upbringing which is unpaid labor, and benefits mostly the family the girl gets married to.

Control of women's lives

It is evident from these comments on the socio-cultural context that women are controlled from birth, first as the girl child responsible to the mother for helping take care of the family and siblings, and to the father (final decision) for her access to schooling. If she is able to attend secondary school, she has to avoid or cope with the advances of the many men intent on early marriage or sex and she can only attend higher education with the consent and support of her father. Once married, she is the property of her husband and must obey his demands or he will leave her destitute. At work, she is dependent on co and senior colleagues who are often male majority and who may make inappropriate

demands, decisions in return for her ability to leave the workplace for pressing child care or continuing school, or for a good report on her promotion record.

A third year student law reported that she found life more rewarding to her now that her husband was dead. She felt so because she now can have the freedom to make her own plans and decisions for her own development. She described how while her husband was alive, he never did work in the house in the evenings. Although he was usually home early after work, but he would only sit in the living room reading a newspaper, and or listening to the radio. At 7.00 pm he always liked to find warm water for his bath in the bathroom, after which at 8.00 pm he would have his supper. He normally went to bed at 10.00 pm and would sleep until 7.00 am in the morning. In getting up he wanted to find a hot water bath waiting for him in the bathroom and breakfast ready at table. She lamented that he wanted every day the bed made with fresh bed sheets, a fresh clean pair of socks, clean polished shoes, clean and well ironed underwear, a handkerchief, a shirt and a pair of long trousers. She claimed that these he demanded any day of the year, whether she was pregnant, just delivered, sick or not. She complained that in order to cope with his demands, she was compelled to always keep a close female relative from her family who could assist her with some of the other workload in the family such as child care, cleaning of the house and compound, washing clothes, and buying the groceries because she herself was also working full time as a local magistrate. A non student elderly retired woman nurse in Dar-Es-salaam lost her husband during my research. When I visited her to share my condolences surprisingly she said in Kiswahili, "Edith mdogo wangu, wala usinisikitikie sana kwani wala sioni lililibadilika kawangu kwa msiba huu kwani hizi suruali zote unazoziona hapa kaziacha na miaka mingi ziko hivihivi humu ndani marehemu hakuwa analala tena ndani humu." Meaning, "Edith my sister, do not sympathize much with me any way for his pants are left hanging in the house as has been the case for many years he never spent nights here.

One experienced educationist explained in detail her perceptions why many other women do not achieve in their higher education as she has managed. She said that there are many constraints for women; and that really when we look at the constraints for women we have to go very far back. For example she said for many women the constraints are back at home. She explained that some women had not been brought up in

a family that really gave them the opportunity "go" as she got from her very supportive father. She said if her father had decided that he would send only the boys to school she would not be where she is to day. She lamented that there are many girls where their family does not believe in education for girls. So, the girls may not go to school, or if they go to school, they do not give them encouragement to perform well or if they go to school then they do not give them the necessary facilities to make sure that they can perform well. Therefore girls are "naturally disadvantaged from most boys right from their homes."

She further explained other forms of constraint for girls saying that even if girls manage to go to school, there are other constraints that come in many different forms. For example, the family may be supportive and the girl is in school, but depending on factors, -for instance, the school environment, a lot of girls due to circumstances (usually not of their own fault) that lead them to getting pregnant, are expelled from school and are not helped (by the government, family or the society) to get another chance to try again in their life. In a way they are totally discarded from life and their society at a very young age.

For those who make it, she explained that they finish school and they go to college or university and finally get a job, and even may get married. But, they still get so many constraints even in their jobs and marriages, where their male bosses demanded sex and or would write then bad reports and transfer then to remote difficult places when they were uncooperative. Some women depending on the environment they have been brought up in do not really have self-confidence, for most women are made to believe that women are inferior to men in everything. Unless somebody helps them go through an empowering process they will keep a very low profile (not be pro-active), and not show that they can do it even though they are actually capable of doing it. For women who are not very strong, what happens in their families can actually negatively influence their work because when they go to the office with the problems at home they are affected and perform badly. She claimed many offices to have very many such women under this effect and it is difficult for them to get the promotions to go up in their work, thus worsening their situation.

For some women they can be doing very well in their families and marriages, but

the working environment can become very unempowering for them, particularly with the existing male dominated work force and leadership in working places. Sometimes a working male colleague, or boss just pull down a women for no reason that is work related, but because of their attitudes towards women, or when they find that the woman is more intelligent than they are then they find some other means of pulling the woman down.

She cautioned therefore, that for most women if they are not really doing well (educating themselves or advancing themselves at work), they should not be judged immediately as low in performing, or that they do not work hard. Instead, we really need to study what environment that keeps them where they are because it may have nothing to do with the issue at hand, such as many women not enrolling with the OUT education programs. Likewise, for women who have made it, or are doing really well often it is by good luck that somewhere they have gone through some environments that helped them where others did not get the opportunity.

A regional director reported that some women and men complained of hostile employers who refused them permission to attend the regional centre activities, and who would make frequent transfer of their employees once they found out that they are involved in studies with the OUT. The transfers were mainly intended to interfere with the student's study plan settings, particularly the small family economic business which help the student augment the salary income in order to be able to afford the tuition fees demanded by the OUT. For example, a dormant second year student working in a private boarding school as Manager in house-keeping, reported that she was harassed and locked out by her school authorities for fake lost school property on days when she was supposed to be doing her first timed test for her second year studies. As such she is a dormant student still contemplating on how to go about it for she has been scared to ask again for permission to go to the regional centre activities for fear of losing her job.

Another regional director also reported that employers do not give permission, and are not readily supportive for their workers to participate in regional centre activities. For instance several students from different situations complained that their heads of school demanded that before they could go to the regional centre activities they get someone to teach their classes. One also complained that at the beginning, when she was

applying to enroll with the OUT, the head took long time (over a month) to forward and recommend her letter of application to enroll with the OUT. Another explained that the head demanded that on days that they were attending examinations and or timed tests, they find time in between the examinations to be in the school teaching. This, she noted, would affect greatly their performance.

The director, highlighting further his views, said that the majority of uncooperative employees were normally found with the private employment sector, and that it affects more male students because there are many of them employed in the private sectors, particularly the private secondary schools. I personally spoke to six female teachers who did not enroll, and were afraid to tell their regional director and me the truth about their circumstance, because they were attracted to the big salaries and good accommodation and other fringe benefit packages given by their private employer,

The director explained that the employers find it difficult to accept, and or cope with the number of days (7-14), several times in a year (OUT Prospectus, 2000), for so many years (6-8 years), that an employee has to be away from duty, particularly if the employees involved happen to be several of them studying at the same time, as is increasingly proving to be the case for male teachers in many of the secondary schools, both government and private secondary schools. He claimed that while the government can afford to put more than one teacher per subject in a school, this has not been easy for the private sector to afford. He informed me that the problem does not only become the employer paying teachers for days that they were away studying, but that when the teachers miss the classes they are supposed to teach, it adversely affect students performance. He said that currently the government has introduced competitive performance in all secondary schools, and that particularly some private secondary schools are being closed down if the students persistently do not perform well at the national examinations.

Women students also complained to him that some employers, the supervisors/heads of institutions where they work, often do not allow them to study during office hours regardless even if they are not teaching. Two primary school teachers reported cases where their heads of school, and subject master harassed them about the big books (study units) sent to them from the OUT. One was told by the head of school,

"Oh, so now you want to become a professor not a primary school teacher any more, what does your husband think about it?" Then she harassed her to go out to the farm to help with the pupils' extra activity gardening schedule. The student had already asked a friend to swap with her for that time because she was trying to get ready for her timed test the following week. When she explained her arrangements to the head, she roared saying, "So, you think we are fools when we make the time table," and she demanded she went at once to where she was supposed to be for the time."

A non-student and a teacher at a girls' secondary school explained the concerns of employers when too many workers in their institutions become OUT students and have to go for the regional centre activities at the same time. Six female teachers who together applied for the OUT studies so that they could study together were told"

> we should also be considerate about the school being able to manage its teaching. She advised us to consider enrolling at least in turns, not all of us at once so that there is no shortage of teaching staff when we have to go for the regional activities, for this would make all of us leave the school together.

She explained that if all were to go for the OUT studies, it would be a total of 6 female teachers and 2 male teachers who were already studying with the OUT from the same school. In the end, they decided to register in turns but the oldest of the group did not return from holidays in time to register so that in the end no one registered for the year. A similar kind of concern was sensed also by another student who also complained that the head of school hesitated to allow her permission, and it took her a long time to recommend and forward her letter of application.

No role models for girls in society

A female lecturer in chemical sciences from a conventional university commented that since culturally the status of women in their families and communities is low, the mothers fail to be good role models for their daughters to emulate (as many sons may emulate their fathers) in order to aim high in their education development. They believed major barriers to women's enrollment to be related to uncooperative employers and uncooperative husbands. Uncooperative employers refuse them permission to register with the OUT, or attend the regional centre activities, and sometimes transfer them when they find out that they are studying to stifle their small family economic projects, which enables them to pay the tuition fees. Uncooperative husbands also refuse them permission

to enroll, and to participate in regional and study centre activities. Some directors felt that lack of role models was the issue and they expected that once there were women graduates they should act as recruiters for other women. One regional director proclaimed, "may be, as it is for other institutions that are new, we can say each university graduates its first group in order to encourage other students who might be in that program." Several woman educationalists informed me that from the start, most women have been denied the chance to go to school by their fathers. They get overburdened with the children and house care assisting their mothers while the boys are allowed to be playing or doing their school homework. The few who do get university educated are not given a chance in the better jobs with the government or private sectors, so they do not get to be good role models for other women to aspire for university education.

DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED

Research Question 2. *What difficulties do women students experience while studying with the OUT?*

Two types of difficulties were identified from the participants' responses, difficulties related to distance education and the OUT course delivery model and those associated with the juggling of social, economic and academic demands and the lack of support for them as learners. They are discussed under operational (institutional) difficulties and personal difficulties.

Operational (Institutional) Difficulties

Issues concerning distance education provision have been organized to reflect the students' experiences. Orientation is followed by concerns about access to study materials and part-time tutors, who are often used to compensate for the lack of study materials. Isolation and uncertainty in studying at a distance is followed by students concerns about study centres.

Orientation

A senior OUT admission officer from the Registrar's office reported that he admits students and informs them by writing to them directly, posting the list of names in all regional centres, announcing in the national papers normally the UHURU and Daily News which are government papers, and on the national radio. He said the OUT explains to the students in their letters that they are required to participate in a one day orientation in their respective regional centre where they can do their registration, pay their tuition fees, and pick up their study materials. The students immediately consult with their respective regional directors on matters regarding tuition fees payments, particularly when they cannot afford to pay right away, availability of study materials and reference books, organization of their study time and creation of their local study centres, and the structure of the OUT.

A regional director reported that during orientation students are usually told about the OUT structure and the importance of forming and belonging to a local study centre group. They are encouraged to participate in the regional centre activities, make intensive use of their prospectus, and pay serious consideration to the student guide information. However, many students do not really get to know well, or get well informed of their study environment, particularly the use of their local study and regional centres. Many students do not know how to communicate their problems and do not know the right OUT personnel to consult. They do not really get to know even the OUT structure. He found many students are limited in their learning, not only in understanding the study materials, but also in knowing where and who to ask for help.

Another regional director complained that many beginning students are placed in a traumatic dilemma which leads them to dropout of the OUT immediately when they find out that they cannot get all their study materials and assignments for the whole year even after they pay the required tuition fees. He said that for those who do not pay their tuition fees, many of them register, but usually they never return to start their programs. He found it difficult to follow up such students due to lack of reliable communications with them. He lamented that continuing students get discouraged, often dropping out too when they also find that the OUT fails to also ensure that students get their timetables in time for their timed tests and examinations, assignment feedback in time to revise for the

timed tests, timed tests results to prepare for their annual examinations, and examination results in time to start their next academic year. He complained that this situation also puts regional directors in big dilemma, and they critically need to provide very close counseling to the students to try to ensure that they do not dropout or go dormant. He complained:

> You find that students get themselves registered for the courses they are supposed to take in their selected programs, but due to non availability of some of these study units, you find that the students always come to the regional centre complaining that they registered for courses but there are no study materials for their units. They question with anger saying, "What kind of University is this!"

He said that due to lack of study materials, beginning students, and those in second year are normally advised to take study materials from the following year in their option course units so that they can have enough study units per year. Sometimes tutors provide continuing students with detailed outlines of their study units and recommended references. They are advised they can find the references at the national libraries where there are sections reserved for the OUT students because sometimes usually these materials are not actually available yet at the OUT regional libraries.

Isolation

Adverse experiences in physical, social and intellectual isolation on the part of students were mentioned in the stories of women and personnel at the OUT.

One student said when she started studying with the OUT in 1995 she was alone as a woman enrolled in the OUT programs in the Regional Centre ("mwanamke nipo mwenyewe kwenye mwaka wa nne"). She said that:

> I was studying alone after I found out there was no other female student. I traveled alone to the National Library in town, and sometimes I would use the Teachers College library to search for answers to my home assignments. Other students, who were males were scattered all over other areas of the region. The only other female student I came to know was X. She moved into the region in her third year. She settled about one hour bus-drive northwest of town. This is how I came to know a subject-peer.

A third year student from Coast region explained that although she had free office transport that she could use any time she could not find women subject-peers in study centres.

A fourth year student reported that very few women participated in the study and

regional centre activities. She explained this to be due at least in part to the OUT having very few women enrolled with it. She said the few women who enroll find study and regional centres are located too far from their homes and work places, therefore making it impossible to go and return on the same day. As such they find participation very expensive to afford when they have to use bus transportation and or pay for accommodation to sleep overnight.

She explained that women who try to participate, often find themselves alone without other women, or subject-peers, and being amongst large numbers of men who are not willing to share readily academic discussions with women students, or are mainly studying the science, business and law subjects, while the women are in the arts, language, and education subject combinations.

Also some women are usually not allowed to attend by their husbands, and or do not get the time to be visiting each other, or to participate in the study and regional centre activities. She found that most women students had difficulties in making contacts with study-groups and subject-peers wherever they may be and identified the situation as accelerating the problem of many women not persisting with the OUT.

One strategy for combating isolation is through "student-to-student" assistance ("kuleana") to help them manage their studies at the OUT. Many women in the Focus Group explained that they have naturally been doing the "kuleana" process of enrolling together in their struggle to cope with the OUT programs. This way they would be assured of subject-peers and women companions amongst the many men when they participate in the regional and local study centre activities. Two non- students who were considering enrolling with the OUT were trying to persuade each other to join at the same time when I was holding interviews with them.

A fifth year education student believed that lack of study mates was one of the major reasons why many women do not enroll with the OUT. They fear that they will have no way of sharing discussions with other students in their studies in their own isolated environments. As for her, what seemed to be a more convenient study centre for her was a nearby primary school. She and a peer woman student (not subject-peer) chose to go there to study for a few hours especially on weekend afternoons to avoid friends, relatives and family members. It was very important for her to have another woman go

with her because, on weekends the primary school compound was usually deserted, so it was very scary to be there alone and there was the danger of being assaulted. But, when they were in third year her peer lost her husband and she had to go back to her home village since the traditions demands that wives stay where husbands are and they have been separated since.

Lack of Confidence

Perhaps because of isolation and lack of study-peers, many women were said to lack confidence in their studies. However, the issues seem to be more related to context than personal ambition.

An experienced regional director explained that he found lack of self-confidence to be the major factor preventing many women from enrolling with the OUT programs. He said, the OUT as an open learning system demands that students study on their own, but most women are very busy with domestic affairs which becomes a big burden for them because they have to make sure that their families are run properly. He thinks that the programs at the OUT have no means to exert pressure on the student, such as having lecture times, strict deadlines, immediate tutor help in difficult areas of their study units so that they may be forced to focus more on their studies. He said students are just given their studies, and are left on their own to find their own study time and style. This way the majority of women find it difficult to organize themselves to get time for their home chores as well allocate ample time to study. As such, many women lack even the motivation ("ile kudhubutu kujituma.") to plan to enroll with the OUT. He claimed that women lack the motivation because they find that they are overburdened, they have lots of other things to do in their families and society, so they don't think they can have any time and or energy left to devote to distance university studies.

He found students experiencing difficulties in getting used to the distance learning method. He said that students find it difficult to adjust to a system without the teacher-student contact relationship, and that they need more support from part time subject specialists to enable them have the confidence for their academic performance. He felt that such a system was impractical for several reasons: It wasn't part of the OUT policy of a "distance learning mode of teaching" (OUT, 1993a, p. 6) with little or no part-time teaching support of subject specialists. Second, Tanzanian academic specialists are few,

and their availability for so many regional centres with students who are enrolled in a variety of subject combinations is impossible.

> I think that the idea of the teacher-student contact relationship is the adjustment which students are taking time to really know that that is the only way of teaching for passing examinations in the distance mode of learning at the OUT. In other words the face-to-face contacts we normally use in a conventional teaching is not really out of their mind as far as the students are concerned.
> So, may be that we continue to tell them, and during the regular OUT face-to-face sessions to continue to inform them, but many of them will not really accept this as fact. So, I think that is one of the problems they are facing as they think whatever information they need to know from the books they have, they think they cannot understand it well without the teacher that is expert in that subject. From that case they continue to ask for local part timers to come forward, but also the numbers of these part timers will take time to grow anyway, especially with the quality control maintained by the OUT not allowing unverified part-timers.

Another regional director also reported that he found most students, particularly women, experienced difficulties in coping with the distance method of instruction, because they have only experienced the traditional teaching methods. However, he perceived the OUT one-day orientation to be not really adequate to re-orient adult learners into a totally new method of learning they never experiences before in their lives. He blamed the OUT operational arrangements saying that the administration and management of the studies and examinations (e.g. the study contents and examinations procedures) are very much done with rules and regulations similar to those of conventional universities such as Dar-Es-Salaam and Sokoine. He claimed that this conflicts with the learning needs, conditions, environment, readiness, and experiences of distance learners.

A woman tutor at the OUT complained that the distance education system is itself a barrier to women. She said that considering the nature of the OUT study programs, the women find that compared to studying through the conventional universities they have to put in a lot more effort in order to achieve well. For example, she argued that while with the conventional universities students have their library built on campus, for most OUT students they have to make lots of trips from their homes or work places to wherever they can find a library to help them. She also argued that whereas the conventional university students have access to their subject peers and lecturers for discussing the difficult areas of their study units, the OUT students first have to find out if there are any other subject

peers nearby, and second find out if the peers are willing to share discussions with them particularly when they happen to be male students. Also their tutors are normally away from them, and are usually not easily accessible, even by mail as they never really reply. She further argued the fact that OUT students are expected to travel to their regional centres to do their examinations as a major factor holding back most women from enrolling with the OUT studies because the majority of them cannot leave their families due to their roles and the culture binding most married women to stay as close to their families as possible, lack of funds, and non availability for accommodation suitable for women safety and needs of nursing mothers and with little children. So, she argued that men can cope much better with their OUT studies because they do not do the "grass-root work" in the family.

Ongoing Financial Demands

A fourth year student complained that tuition fees were a very big problem to most women. Many employed women do not hold as well paying jobs as men do, and the majority of women are not employed at all. She highlighted that students must pay 60 % of the total Ts120,000 tuition fees before they can be given any study materials. As well, they must pay for their own transport, accommodation, food and medical care to participate in the regional and study centre activities; pay for library fees, and part time tutors to help them with difficult parts of their studies, and photocopying of their assignments. Town accommodation that is suitable and safe for women is very expensive at above Ts10,000 per night. Often women studying with the OUT are few and are often alone in the regional centre activities. Because they cannot share accommodation with female peers, everything is expensive, and being alone amongst many men makes the whole situation very scary. A fifth year student explaining student overhead costs in participating in the regional study centre, complained that in order to participate in a one-day face-to-face session in her regional centre she must use not less than Ts100,000 if she has no relative to stay with in the town. With a relative to help her she would normally spend about ~~Ts50,000~~. Her return bus ticket to her local and working village place costs Ts30,000 return. Similar story was repeated by many OUT women students.

Many other women students' stories pointed out that if the children are already going to school, especially secondary schools, the tuition fees become a big problem for

them to afford for they also have to pay for the children's schooling. They explained that many men refuse to pay for their family living costs when they have employed wives and are not willing to help their wives pay for university education. One senior law student, one non-student, one male husband of a dormant beginning student, and two full time regional directors in different situations said that men think when a woman has a family and she is employed in a very demanding job, then if she also goes to school, the children and family members suffer for they do not get proper care.

However, another third year law student explained how she had got confidence to do her studies. She suggested that the best way was to at least try first to find the means to get registered. She tells other women get the Ts, 3,500 first and register successfully so that they secure the admission to the program that they want to pursue. Then, if they cannot afford the 60 percent down payment demanded by the University right away, they could get started by borrowing study materials from other students. She also argued that, even after students pay the required fees, they still find that the OUT does not have all the materials for all units. Therefore, she claimed that studying with the OUT she finds that once started, it is also possible to be able to find some sponsorships. She reported after she had been able to register and manage well with her OUT studies, she gained much confidence in herself competence that she now encourages other women by telling them that:

> O.K., think this way, "that there are problems to be able to study well, yes, but one cannot really address a problem before it is at hand, and you then understand the depth of the problem in order to understand how to go about it. Always there will be some solutions to whatever problems that one have.

However, many women told me about the hardships they endured in trying to raise the OUT tuition fees. The majority of them have very low paying jobs, their small family economic projects do not earn much profit, and are much limited to women in towns, while many husbands with working wives do not usually support their families financially. A number also complained that for the OUT, if a student delays paying her fees even for one month, from January to February, she runs the risk of finding that no study materials are available. Furthermore, while some OUT staff mentioned bursaries and scholarships, another male senior administrator said bluntly:

To be frank, it is easier for the woman to go to a regular university for three years

> and get finished with her studies, for under such a process, she can stay on campus and concentrate on her studies. It also becomes easier for donors to offer sponsorships for they will be able to know the expected date for the woman to complete her studies.

I heard several similar stories from the women respondents and regional directors.

Study Materials

Almost every student and many regional directors complained about the problems caused by lack of sufficient study materials. In 1995, when one student started studying, the OUT used to post study materials directly to students who registered themselves and paid any initial amount of money they could afford, "Even just Ts2,500." When this money reached the OUT headquarters in Dar-Es-Salaam, the university posted all the study materials and assignments required for the year to the student. However, later, the OUT decided to issue the study materials through the Regional Centres and demanded each student pay 60% of the total fees of Ts79, 000 for first year, and Ts72, 000 for the following years to get the study materials.

The reasons for this were basically economic. The OUT Registrar complained that the Post Office Company in Tanzania did not provide generous support postal services to the OUT distance training programs regardless of its knowledge that the bulk of the correspondence involved was between the OUT and its student clients. In addition, as Vice-Chancellor Mmari pointed out, the OUT was forced to become a commercial enterprise and so could not send materials to students who had not paid at least 60% of their tuition fees. The present issues concern the inadequacy of the number of study materials available and the uncertainty of their arrival in the regional centres.

Several students in different circumstances described the difficulty situation getting study materials. One student explained that in order for an OUT student to get study materials, she must ensure that she has the money to pay before the orientation of the first year students in January.

> After orientation, often you do not find any study materials left because the first year students (they come earlier) and second years also take study materials from the other years (2, 3, 4) when they find they do not get all their study materials as they do not want to stay without enough study units to do per year and the OUT normally allows them take them.

She explained that most continuing students find that they cannot complete

paying for their previous year tuition fees. As such, they have to wait each year until they can complete paying the previous tuition fees, then they can go pay for their current year to get study materials, but then find that the books are all gone! She complained that also, the University of Dar-Es-Salaam students like the books very much and they buy them if they are not picked up during the orientation session.

She lamented that this way most other students, males and females in her year have dropped out one by one until only five are now left active. She said,

> In 1998, in this region for women students, only two in fourth year could sit for the first timed test in May. The rest are from the lower years, first and second years only. Most other women could not do the timed test due to lack of study materials.

Some of them that she had contact with have told her that perhaps they would be able to sit in September during the second timed test, and are considering doing both first and second timed tests together if they can get the study materials in time to study, but they said they were not very sure either.

> I don't know if they will make it or not, because it depends on their ability to search for study materials, and do their assignments in time. It demands that they study under stress if the study materials are late, which many women especially the married ones with children cannot cope with.

She commended the married women saying, "I really commend the women, they are working harder than I can even do" ("Kwa hiyo akina mama ninawasifu kweli wanabidii kuliko hata mimi ninavyoweza na sina watoto.")

A first year dormant student explained that she and her husband registered with the OUT in 1996 to study education. However, she could not get started with her studies for two years because she could not get her study materials. She explained that her husband travelled to Dar-Es-Salaam and paid Ts 80, 000 advance payment for their tuition fees (Ts40, 000 each), attended the January 1996 orientation, and attended the first and second face-to-face sessions (I conducted and met them myself) and still could not get study materials. She was told later by one inquisitive student that some of their missing study materials which had been posted by the OUT well before January 1996, were still lying at the Dar-Es-Salaam post office full of dust. However, even after the materials were found, she discovered that her study materials were not actually available

yet at the OUT. As a result, the local students decided to send a student representative to collect their study materials from Dar-Es-Salaam and he would physically travel with them to ensure that they arrive safely.

Similarly, a fifth year education student explained that she has decided to travel to Dar-Es-Salaam OUT head quarters (four times now) instead of going to her regional centre to get her study materials in order to be sure to get all available study units for her program per year. She explained that it has been possible for her to manage the costs for the trips only because she has her brother working and living in Dar-Es-Salaam, who normally provides her with accommodation food, and medical care costs for the period (3 to 5 days) she usually spends in Dar-Es-Salaam trying to get approval to get the study units.

I myself agreed to help a student who was still missing one unit and who, after one week at the OUT, could spend no more time in Dar-Es-Salaam. I spent another week visiting the OUT head office each day to get her name cleared from the registrar, the bursar and the chief supplies officer before I could go to the stores personnel to be issued the study materials. Several other students complaining the same issue said that most of these people are not in their offices together at once for most of the day each day. The chief supplies officer seldom comes to his office and the bursar comes only for a short time early in the morning and goes out again to other office business in town. The experience with helping out the student helped me understand the students' frustrations.

Two fifth year Law students complained of their slow progress in completion rates. Although they were doing their fifth year with the OUT, they had many units pending due to lack of study materials. In their first year they received only two (Law of Contract, and Legal Methods Part One) out of six units and they did not get all two units from the OUT. They had to borrow the unit on Law of Contract from another male student and photocopy the whole unit for Ts15, 000 at their own expense. The OUT would not reimburse them, although they had paid the 60 percent tuition fees required in order to get study materials. In the following year, 1996, they expected to have to pay only part of their tuition fees because in 1995 they did not get all their study units. As such they expected to carry forward some of their tuition fees from 1995. However, during the 1996 examination registration, the OUT demanded that each student must

have paid full tuition fees for the year 1996 regardless of the number of study units received in previous years in order to be allowed to do the annual examinations. They complained that this was a "one-way traffic" treatment for students studying with the OUT.

This made them feel that the OUT was not doing justice to their students and they were of the opinion that it would be more ideal if students were asked to pay by the number of courses they get each year, or students be given the total number of units they are required to cover and the cost to complete a program, and let the students be flexible to pay in whatever style they choose (lump-sum or by unit), as long as each unit taken is paid in advance.

Students often borrowed, shared or photocopied materials in order to be able to study for their examinations when study materials were scarce. A fifth year education student was sharing three of her study units in education with five other OUT students who could not get a copy of their own. She reported that some of the five had to travel on foot for more than three hours to collect the unit and use it for seven days only so that another person could also get the chance and the time to use them to write their assignments ready for the set deadlines.

She complained of the problem of getting study materials at the regional study centre. She said it has been difficult for students to tell when they arrive therefore the students have to travel frequently to the regional centre to check. This cost money and time, and sometimes bosses and husbands refuse to allow them such frequent travels due to pressing employment and family duties. She also complained that even when the study materials arrive, they are normally very few, so students are never assured of getting their share regardless of paying the necessary tuition, a point brought up by many other students also. Many other students separately complained about the problem of getting study materials. They also suggested that they would have preferred the study materials be posted directly to them to avoid the costs and hassles of following them up in the regional centres.

Here is one student's experiences in following up her study materials in her regional centre where a one way travel trip took five hours due to bad roads. She said in 1997 she started studying with the OUT, single parenting her 8 years old daughter, and

teaching full time as the only biology teacher at a girls boarding secondary school in remote area in the region. In her first year, she had no problems getting study materials. When she went to the orientation in January, she paid 60 % of the total fees and could get all the study materials she needed for the first year. However, in her second year in 1998, when she went to the orientation session to get her study materials, the regional director informed her that study materials for continuing students would be available during the first face-to-face session in the regional centre.

She went to the orientation but first she had to get somebody to take care of her daughter, and had to travel by bus for more than five hours. She also said that unfortunately this time she was already over seven months pregnant, but she decided to travel all the same (packed with all needs for a new baby in case it happened) to ensure that she collected her study materials before she delivered the baby. She was very fortunate to travel safely to the face-to-face sessions and back home, but was much disappointed when the regional director announced in the face-to-face session that the study materials had not arrived from Dar-Es-Salaam and that he was expecting them any time. She could not follow up the study materials any more because she delivered her baby two weeks later and it was no longer easy for her to travel with the baby and this made her despair of continuing her studies with the OUT.

I personally attended some orientations and first face-to-face sessions during my research in Tanzania. I witnessed the regional directors in many of the regional centers announce to the students during the sessions that the study materials had not arrived from Dar-Es-Salaam. I also heard the students complain bitterly about it, but the regional directors explained that they had even prepared to go to Dar-Es-Salaam but the transportation let them down, and also some of the study materials were just not available even at the OUT. Many other regional directors provided me with similar stories.

Mmari, the founding Vice Chancellor of the OUT, explained the problem of lack of sufficient study materials at the OUT. He said that the OUT has been experiencing difficulties in holding responsible its part time tutors and unit writers. These were hired from other institutions of higher learning in Tanzania to help OUT on a part time contract basis. Many unit writers who signed their contracts with the OUT to help write the study units immediately the OUT started have not handed in their work despite the OUT giving

them an advance honorarium. It has been difficult for the OUT to sue them and or even to get other experts to replace them. He used my own experience as an example.

> You were founding Dean of the Faculty of Education. You proposed some people from University of Dar-Es-Salaam to write some units in education in 1994. Five years later now, there is nothing here. These people have not submitted their work. We have got the names of the people and what they promised in signing up their contract five years ago. So, we are talking about "non-existence" of certain course materials.

Mmari expected that Deans of Faculties and experienced OUT tutors should be able to go around the problem as advised by the British Open University.

> Their advice is that we look for a text book, written by some authority in the subject, and those OUT faculty experiencing acute study material problems, could go through the book and write guidelines to help students, and advise the students which chapters of the book to consult. They could give the students assignments to guide their study through the selected chapters of the book so the students can do their units even where there are no unit study materials.

Mmari claimed that the Law Faculty has done such plans and so more faculties should follow the same example. He reiterated that it is good that the students are complaining because the OUT should help them solve the problem. It means that the Deans and the tutors at the OUT have to work harder on this problem.

Although using course outlines and resource materials is the only option available to some students, many complained about the time and resources required to access such materials. One student explained that she was forced to drop her education component because she found herself spending more time searching for study materials than reading them after she got them. She explained that in order to complete one home assignment, she often travels several times to the regional town to go to the regional Centre library, the national library, and sometimes she is forced to travel to Dar-Es-Salaam OUT head office library in search of the study materials. She could not use her weekends to search for the study materials because normally the libraries and the regional director's office are closed. She explained that at that moment she had a course in "Social Linguistics," which she was doing, and already she did the required assignments and the timed tests, but up to the time of the interview when she was to do her annual examinations she had not received any study materials for the course. She lamented that

there were history books on North Africa and Central Africa which were required but she had never seen them with her eyes.

She could not do those examinations because she could not afford to buy the books, or photocopy them from other students and they were not found in the library. She explained that her regional director explained to her that the study materials get delayed, or never arrive at all because usually those books are being ordered from outside Tanzania, like from University of Nairobi or other universities that teach by distance.

One student complained that when she goes to the National Regional Library in her region they demand that she pay them Ts 500.00 per day if she is not a member, or Ts 3,000.00 for an annual membership. She explained that when she first registered with the OUT in 1995, she was informed during orientation that she would be able to use the National Libraries everywhere in the regional towns in the country, and that there would be a full time library assistant to assist OUT students to be able to use the special section of the libraries set aside exclusively for the use of the OUT students. However, she complained that since 1997, she has not been able to use the library again because of the costs involved. She explained that she has been informed by the librarians that the fees they charge is to help the librarians improve their services to the people using it. She lamented that she is having problems as an OUT student because she has no reliable library where she could go and do her studies. She complained that the library situation makes the whole access to study materials very difficult for her because she cannot afford to pay the library fees demands, bus fares, and a meal while in town all the time she needed to visit the library. She also reported that in the regional and study centre there are no library facilities yet, while some of the OUT regional centres' library has very limited references, usually a few copies of the OUT units that are not for borrowing out.

Part-Time (Private) Tutors

Students appreciated the study materials and generally found them clear and easy to understand. However, especially when the study materials were unavailable, and students were forced to use texts or reference materials, they also wanted access to tutors who could explain difficult ideas. While in Dar-Es-Salaam some tried to access OUT resident tutors they were not available, and if found they claimed to be very busy with their other residential duties. Most sought out a local person who was at least a degree

holder specialist in the subject area. Many students raised the problem of the lack of part-time tutors and their role in the OUT program not only in the rural areas but also in Dar-Es-Salaam.

One student decided to enroll with the OUT university education to improve her educational qualifications. She said the results were good for the courses where she had obtained the study materials in time to study well. For the education units, the results were poor because the study materials reached her very late, and also she could not find part time tutors to help. She said in that region, it is not easy to get tutors for education studies. Many people who had good degree qualifications in education have left because of the low pay, and entered other fields such as business, statistics and research.

Another student complained that in studying with the OUT she experienced major problems in delay of study materials, and some subjects, such as English Literature, and Philosophy of Education have been difficult for her to understand alone. She searched for personal part time tutors to help her locally but such tutors were not easily available in her rural areas. For her English Language subject it was only possible to find competent and willing part time tutors in the regional town, a distance of about 2 hours bus drive from where she lived and worked. However, due to lack of telephones, emails or fax, sometimes she traveled to town, paying about Ts 1,000 return ticket, only to find that the tutor had left the office and was not available for the day regardless of having a meeting scheduled. She lamented that getting competent, reliable, local, part time tutors for the region was a major problem and this was also compounded by students not having the amount of money tutors' would like to charge per hour.

Another student explained the rising costs of tutorial help.

> I really love my OUT studies, and I am very serious about studying. But, now I have come to realize that there are problems with distance learning university training. The studies are far away from tutor help and sometimes you get very distracted. Other times you can get a part time tutor for help but today when these part time tutors see that you are doing university studies, they charge very high. Some tutors might accept say Ts1,000 for just a very short time. Now in trying to learn you find that for that length of time you have learned nothing, while you have to pay, and the next day you must continue the tuition with them again because you did not learn much yet! Eee! The money issue is really a problem to me.

One student reported that some tutors have been charging Ts1,000 per hour and

more in the rural areas, and up to Ts 12,000 for some of the Law students in Dar-Es-Salaam who use University of Dar-Es-Salaam professors to teach them in the evenings. They are required to buy the professors' books in street vendors in town at rates of Ts40 to 60 a copy for a used book and there are no new print outs any where in the bookshops, nor copies available in any libraries. Finally they manage to pass the OUT course with "C" grade. She commended her study centre saying that although it only started in 1997, it has helped her and the three other students improve their scores a lot. She commended the study materials produced from the OUT, but complained that the biggest problem was how to get them.

OUT Feedback

Students discussed their experiences in corresponding with the OUT. One married student had written advising the OUT that she was dropping her education component because in her circumstances accomplishing 9 subjects per year was too much for her. She lamented that up to the day I was interviewing her she had never received any response to her letter from the OUT. She decided on her own to stop doing the education courses and continued with the History and English. The only way she could tell that the OUT accepted her request was by the OUT not sending her the education study materials.

A director was also concerned that the OUT does not respond to students' written inquires arising from the face-to-face sessions and sent to the OUT headquarters, for the subject specialists to write back to the students. This too has made students be much discouraged to attend the face-to-face sessions, unless the director assures them in advance that there will be their subject specialist attending. Despite his attempts to encourage communication and develop student support structures, the lack of the response from the OUT is demoralizing for students.

> How to make it more attractive I think is for the OUT to have in each of the regional centres more subject specialist instructors, or lecturers in all areas of programs that the OUT offers so the University can be assured that when students come they can get their answers to their given problems immediately. This could be one way of doing it, but this is very expensive and it will take time to be achieved.
> So, what we are doing for now is that we leave students with their normal group discussions in their study centres. We encourage them to continue to form their study centres so that they can discuss with their colleagues without necessarily

> demanding face-to-face contacts of the teacher or subject specialists. This way then, things they record to be difficult can be communicated to subject specialists in the OUT head office, who may then contact the subject specialists staff to reply to the student with maximum expertise. However, this process has not been effective.

A second year student corroborated his and other students' frustration, noting that in studying with the OUT, it is difficult to communicate with other students, part time tutors, and the OUT residential tutors. When they write to tutors in Dar-Es-Salaam, usually tutors do not respond, or it takes a very long time to get them to write back, and by then it is often late, or sometimes the times test is done. Students do not have a way of communicating easily and fast to get the help they need when they get to difficult parts of their studies.

Partly as a result of such complaints and mainly to provide more support to women students, the OUT appointed a Dean of Students. Students who have concerns write to her. If students have not received their study materials, assignments, letters of admission or what so ever, or if they have written letters to their respective Deans to require or inquire about certain things on academic issues, but they have not received a reply, they write to the Dean of Students, who then answers them through letter writing, face to face counseling, or sometimes by telephone where applicable. As Dean of Students, she also deals with counseling "psychological" matters of students, such as HIV problems. She advises such students on issues of preparing their wills, and helps them be in contact with leaders of their religion and parents who come to have consultations on how to assist them to their terminal stages. Usually this does not get recorded in the OUT files as it is confidential. When the student pass away, the Dean then writes a report in the students' files.

Late or no feedback on assignments, and inadequate record keeping were major complaints from students. Even OUT academic administrators acknowledged that many part time tutors hand in work late or abandon their assigned tasks from the OUT without notice. This includes preparation of questions and the marking of the home assignments, timed tests, annual examinations, and supplementary examinations.

One student complained saying that first the delay in sending back students' assignments disrupts students' preparation for their timed tests and achievement. This is

particularly annoying when tutors demand students write, or re-send assignments that actually have been marked and sent back to students and the students have them. This demands students must make photocopy of the whole marked assignment, sometimes up to 20 pages so that they keep a copy in case it is lost again. This is in addition to the copy made in the first place before the student sent the assignment, just in case it did not reach the OUT, and or gets lost at the OUT. This increases the work and cost for writing each assignment. She lamented that considering the time a woman can afford for studying, and her limited income, it is very difficult for her to cope with such increased demands in accomplishing an assignment when she has several to complete. It is difficult for many students to find photocopiers near where they live or at their workplaces. This compels some women to have to travel, even having to spend a night in their regional towns to get the photocopies done, and sometimes students have been forced to travel to Dar-Es-Salaam to ensure that they have a copy for themselves and that their assignments reach the OUT. She complained that while a student can use carbon paper to make a copy to keep before sending the original assignment, she must photocopy the marked assignment script in order to have a copy.

> So, the records keeping system at the OUT, often makes students fear all the time that probably their assignments will not reach the OUT, And if they reach there, whether they will be safely kept, and returned to them in time to use them for studying in preparation for the timed tests and examinations. As such students are uncertain of achieving their studies, anxious and stressed, so they lose confidence in studying with the OUT.

Many students had similar complaints.

Another student also raised the issue of student records and feedback on students' marked assignments, timed tests and examinations. She explained that in 1997, she posted by "EMS" (couriered) 12 of her home written assignments (some first assignments and some second assignments) bundled together in one envelope after she thoroughly labeled each of them. She was surprised ("cha kushangaza") that the feedback showed that some of them were received and marked, and some showed pending (meaning not received yet). She complained that it was not possible that from the EMS postage some assignments would arrive and some not. She said that such things have really made OUT

students despair, and others quit the studies believing that it is not really possible to study a degree program successfully with the OUT.

She also pointed out that the OUT has problems managing its students' records. In 1997, while she received her marked first and second assignments for the unit on Criminal Law Part Two, and also, first and second assignments for the unit on Law of Contract Part Two, the end of the year student final records from the OUT indicated that the assignments were still pending. She complained that she had to travel with the marked scripts (as she feared to post them lest they get lost again) to her regional centre to show them to her regional director. She explained the problem to him and he advised her to write a covering letter explaining the issue and include in a photocopy of the scripts. He endorsed the letter and the scripts confirming that he had seen the original marked scripts and sent it to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic). However, when she received her 1998 annual report, the marks were still pending and the OUT had not acknowledged receipt of her letter. She made another trip, this time to Dar-Es-Salaam OUT headquarters to show them the marked scripts. To go to Dar-Es-Salaam, she had to spend three days. She had to miss three working days, and her family, where she is single parenting.

She grumbled saying that things like this really confuse students ("vinatuvuruga akili hasa"), and make studying with the OUT very, very difficult. She complained that she is never sure of when an assignment, timed test or even an annual examination is completed because any time she expects to be asked for pending evaluation grades because the OUT has lost its record. She believed that such problems have made many students, and particularly women, surrender their studies and drop out

The Women Focus Group (1999) in Dar-Es-Es-Salaam also had several women who complained of several occasions, either with the home assignments, timed tests, and even the annual examinations where there was no feedback. One, for instance complained that in 1998 she sat for her annual examinations. She said, in order to be allowed to do the examination the student is given an examination number. And in order to enter the examination room, she signed her attendance. And in order to hand in her examination script she also signed. She was very surprised when her final year report sent to her from the OUT indicated pending on the annual examination entry. She said, when she went to

see her Dean of Faculty, the Dean asked her, "Are you sure you really sat for the annual examination?" She could not understand why the question because the Dean knew that if he checked with the examination enrollment he would see her name signed on that record sheet of paper. Many similar experiences were raised, and in particular with the home assignments.

One Dean explained causes for delayed assignments and timed tests results. He said that the problem is due to lack of enough tutors to mark the scripts. He confessed that his faculty, and other faculties at the OUT have been forced to mark assignments during the time the OUT organizes marking workshops for the annual examinations. He also explained that most lost assignments are usually those sent to the part time tutors. He complained that sometimes the part-time tutors are not very responsible with their OUT assigned duties. Often, even experienced part time tutors did not prepare their subject home assignments, timed tests and annual examinations in time. Also, he found many times part time tutors did not mark in time (sometimes never marked) their students' written assignments, timed tests and annual examinations. He explained that even for those who marked their students' work, often he found that the scripts were returned to the Deans' office without the accompanying grade list, while the full time tutors coordinating the subject has already sent the scripts to the students. He acknowledged that such confusion forced the OUT to decide that all students' work would be better marked in a workshop panel to eliminate the confusion, while they were following up the unrecorded grades for some students.

Another Dean also explained the roots of the students' feedback problems. He said that sometimes some students write different names from their registration names, or do not write their examination or registration names on their home assignment papers, timed tests or examination scripts. This often creates difficulties for the tutors, and or Deans to assign a grade and return them to students. Some students do not write the question numbers they do on their examination papers. Others do not provide their change of address when they move and are using a different address. He complained that all these create problems in sending feedback to the students.

He also blamed some of the examination supervisors for not being very careful with helping students during the timed tests and examinations to ensure that each script

has a name and the registration or examination number. He claimed that examination instructions and regulations are very important at university work level, and probably this is why the rules are not bent for any student who does not abide by them. For instance, he concluded, if an assignment does not have the correct name on it, it is considered obsolete right away and it is never marked.

Lack of Information about Examinations

A number of students explained that during examination time, students normally do not get the timetables until they get into the examination room. And those who get the timetable find that there are lots of conflicting schedules. Students find that sometimes they are scheduled to write up to three examinations per day.

This situation demands that students carry lots of books with them all the time during the examinations so that they may revise for the remaining examinations. One student complained that in writing timed tests and the annual examinations, her major problem became "how to carry with her on the buses (sometimes very congested buses) the many study materials she will need to be reading as she continues with the examinations." She claimed that many women need to be reading their units to the last minute before they get into the examination room because they can never have enough time at home to complete their readings. She lamented that many books get lost this way.

The exams usually takes 8 –14 days if one is also doing some supplementary exams (OUT Prospectus, 2000, pp. 143-150). The students get very limited space and provision of food services so that they cannot cope well, and they said that this affects their performance in their examinations. I personally noted in many of the regional centres that I visited, there was no space for halls, or even library space that students could use to do their examinations. The campuses were just a few rooms rented from some local buildings. Usually the regional director just has his small office, and one small room used as a library and stationary room together. Regional centres are still using rented halls or hotel rooms somewhere in their towns, often in awkward locations where students cannot easily buy lunch or snacks.

Other students complained that sometime very inappropriate places are hired for scheduled examinations. One group discussed their discomfort at having to do their examinations in a hotel room next to a bar that was still operating. The women had to go

through the bar to access the room which was amusing for the men but embarrassing for the women (and their husbands if they here about it).

Face-to-Face Sessions.

The women complained about these sessions for a number of reasons. First, have the one day sessions only twice a year is insufficient for their learning needs and is not enough to help them cope with learning at a distance. Second, the sessions are held on weekends when students are not working but they conflict with the demands of husbands who do not want women to be involved in studies when they are at home. Third, are all the problems of travel accommodation, safety and costs associated with going to the centres. Fourth, as women they do not feel comfortable in these environments where most of the male students are unwilling to share ideas or discuss with them.

A fifth year education student explained her study situation and limitations. She often found herself being alone in a group of sometimes up to 60 men, who were not interested in studying with women, and most of them did not have the same subject combination specialization. She said that she took history and geography as her teaching subjects, but most male students she found doing education with her had the science subject combinations such as mathematics and physics, biology and chemistry and so on. So, it was not compatible to share discussions with them in the studies even if they were willing.

Regional Centres

Regional directors are responsible for their regional centres and local study centres. The director lets students know when he will be available and asks them to inform others. Students can then choose to attend specific face-to-face sessions. One director explained that students travel more than 48 km. from their work places to come to the centre. Most students have to take public transport to get there. These distances necessitate that a student must spend nights in rented guesthouses or hotels throughout the regional centre sessions, paying for their food, transport, accommodation and medical care. This, the director stated, was very expensive for students. Employers are usually totally uncooperative in assisting the employees with any financial support.

Regional centre costs

Regional directors explained that students, particularly women students have lots

of other problems related to costs and safety in renting accommodations in town, which neither the employer nor the husbands help them. Several regional directors reported that a safe hotel in their regional towns usually cost at least Ts.10,000 a night without meals, and condemned all kinds of guest houses, which might be cheaper (Ts. 2,000-6,000) for use by decent women. A regional director reported the best that he and the OUT has been able to do is to remind the women students to be very careful, and encourage them to try to contact any relatives living in the town to help them with the accommodation. He claimed that the issues of accommodation, safety and costs in the regional towns has limited most women outside the towns from enrolling with the OUT, and those registered go dormant or dropout early. He noted that majority of his active women students come from the regional town centre only.

Regional centre accommodation

One student discussed the level of accommodation. For those staying in guesthouses, the light provided in the room is very low and yellow in color, so it becomes hard to see the print to read. Also the type of guest houses or hotels they can afford to rent, usually have no table or chair for one to sit on while studying. As such one has to read sitting on the bed all the time. Further to this, the meals at the hotels also become a menace to the health, when one has to be working so hard doing the examinations. She complained that often she gets stomach problems, which leads to real difficulties in concentrating with the examinations. Those who are lucky to stay with relatives, might have a good safe house, but often it is very difficult to gain the necessary privacy a student doing examinations needs. This is because usually the relatives' house is full with other people, particularly the little children and other dependants and the student visitor is expected to participate in all family activities and entertainment.

Regional centre transportation

The regional director also discussed the issue of difficulties with transportation in the rural areas. This was due not only to long distances, but also to the unreliability of the buses and their schedules. He complained that the buses stop in so many places waiting for passengers. Often in the mornings and evenings during rush hour, if the students have to board a bus and if there is only one bus and it gets too full, there is nothing a student can do about it, for the distances are too big to expect use of taxi which they cannot

afford. Sometimes students, who miss a bus may have to wait for very long periods of time (up to over 4-6 hours) depending on the availability of passengers for the drivers are reluctant to run their buses when their buses are not full, claiming that it does not pay for their business and the gas prices involved, and that the government controls the fare for all bus routes in the country. Some women explained to me that they missed their examinations or timed tests because of the lack of dependability of the bus transportation.

The regional director was concerned that many women students go dormant because they do not get sufficient face-to-face tutorials or contact with subject specialists to help them with the difficult areas of their studies both at the regional and local centres. He said often these students live far away from their local study centres as well as their regional centres depending especially on the type of transport available.

Handling child care situations

Not only were accommodation, and travel costs and difficulties deterring women from attending the regional centres. I also found that women had to cope with the situation in their homes regardless of their need to go to the regional centres for examinations.

One female OUT tutor explained the experiences of OUT women students by her own example describing how one day, when she was doing her Masters degree with the conventional University of Dar-Es-Salaam as a non-resident student, their child was very sick at night with very high fever. She was to write an exam on that day. In the morning when she explained her situation and requested that her husband take the child to the clinic, he told her that she could leave her if she had no time, but he was not going to do that for that was not his responsibility. She chose to sacrifice her examination and take the child to the clinic. An OUT fourth year education student explained a similar experience. One morning she had to go for a timed test, but one of their children was sick in the night. In the morning, she requested her husband to take the child to the clinic, but he drove off in his company car and went to work for he was manager of a X company. He left her with a sick child at home. She had to carry her 6 year-old child on her back. She had to go by bus, and take three bus changes to reach the hospital with the child on her back. She said, she also had to remember to carry a book to be reading as she expected that if all went well she could be on time to do the afternoon exam after lunch,

although she would have missed the morning one.

Another OUT third year student in a remote area tutor in a teachers' college had been admitted in hospital with a sick fifteen year old daughter. I found her reading her OUT unit while holding a drip of her daughter who has just come out of a major surgery in the stomach. She explained that she was a single mother of three children from the same man who never married her. The sick daughter was the eldest, but the father took her away after she was seven years. The daughter had been sick several years, but the father never helped her go to hospital. She did not get selected for secondary school education and her father did not try to find a school for her. So, she requested him to take her back so that she could find ways to help the daughter find a private secondary school, but first she had to get the daughter treated with her stomach problems. She said she could not go to her face-to-face sessions as she was in hospital with the child.

I also met other women who had to deal with difficult child care circumstances to go to the regional centres. In one town I visited, I found two women with two children each. One, a single parent, had a three year old baby boy and a girl seven months old; in the other family, both the woman and her husband were studying with the OUT and they had two baby boys, two years old, and five months old. Both these families had baby sitters who were girls of only six years old to look after the children while the parents went away to participate in the timed tests, annual examinations or were at work. I was shocked to see the kind of struggle these women and men were going through to try to get educated through the OUT. Very unfortunately, the regional director informed me that the husband of the couple died in 1999 basically from overwork and malnutrition.

Personal Difficulties

As is already evident, women take on their studies in addition to the other roles accorded them by society. Many women described their lives and the difficulties they faced and on many occasions I visited them in their homes and experienced what they had to cope with. They ranged from personal demands to entertain them, to controlling the woman through access to her children or even electricity to read by. These I labelled Competing demands. In addition, women themselves found they lacked social support for their decision to study with the OUT from husband, family, friends and work colleagues.

Competing demands

One OUT senior female personnel pointed out inadequate women students' support services. She noted many women do not enroll with the OUT because they have too many problems, which make them fear to take studies at university level. She said that in her brief visit with some secondary school women teachers, many women expressed their fears about enrolling with the OUT. They feared that they could not cope with the OUT system of teaching by distance, they were too busy due to their multi-roles in the family and society, they had no place to stay, and to put their young children when they would go for library reference searches and to the study and regional centre activities, and they could not afford the tuition fees and other student overhead costs. However, she believed that most women have also the wrong attitude of not trusting themselves. This limits many women from coming forward (pushing/being aggressive) in gaining the education. But, she explained that the only problem why many women are like that is because they have not been sensitized to the possibilities of studying. In my travels I talked to many non-students and dormant students. Many were very aware of the advantages of further education but their life circumstances made this an impossible dream.

A dormant foundation student with a one year old baby boy complained that her husband took away the baby away from her and sent it to his sister in Dar-Es-Salaam because he did not want her to continue with her one year Foundation Course with the OUT, demanding that she stay home and concentrate on taking care of the family and the baby. She explained that she had to stop her studies and travel to Dar-Es-salaam to search for her son.

Another dormant student in Foundation explained that on weekends, her husband would not allow her do anything in her Foundation Course, but be with him doing the family matters, such as visiting and, or inviting friends and relatives home, going outing together, etc. He asked her that she could do her school work some other time he was not home as he worked away from home and only returned on weekends. She could not attend any of the face-to-face sessions and or discuss with subject-peers as during the week she was a full time teacher at a primary school near her home. At night on weekends, she could not study for her husband would put out the lights, claiming that it

was expensive to pay for the electricity bills.

Another student had a similar experience. She complained that although her husband agreed that she study with the OUT, he demanded that she always cook the family food, and must be with him whenever he was having his meals. At night he would put off the light and insisted the electricity was too expensive. This forced her to be able to study only between 1.00 am and 4.00 am in the morning, at a time when her husband would be very fast asleep. She would use her kitchen as if she were busy with preparations for the next day. At 4.00 am, she would go back to bed so that her husband would not be annoyed, or be aware of what she was doing. At 6.00 am she would be up to prepare the family breakfast. At 7.00 she would leave home and walk for half an hour to X Secondary school where she was the only teacher for English language. She would have to teach all day. At 4.00 pm when school closed, she would make all her school preparations and mark students' work up to 6.00 pm. Then she would go home cook for the family ready for the children to eat at 8.30pm. She reported that at this time her husband would usually not be home yet. Since he normally came home between 10.00 and 11.00 pm, she would get time to sleep, and rest. When her husband came home, she would attend him, and then go to bed again as he would like it that way. So, when she got up at 1.00 am she would have good energy for studying until 4.00 in the morning. She said that this is why it is not easy for women studying with the OUT to get good grades. They cannot really get much time to study well.

Another student described her daily schedule. She explained that she gets up around 5.30 in the morning to get breakfast ready for everybody. She checks on the family projects (chickens and cows to see that the house helper has milked well and all the eggs are collected and stored well, she records the production of the milk and the eggs, and packs some for selling in her school), and she gets the children ready for school. She said in school she starts at 7.30 am to 5.00 pm. On returning home she has to first check on the house helper's work in the family and whether the chickens and cows are well fed. Then she prepares supper for every body and clears out the dishes. She lamented that usually it is after 10.00 at night, when everybody has gone to sleep that she normally can sit down to study. On weekends she has to buy groceries, go to the farm, clean the house and the compound, entertain some visitors who may come, and she has to

go to church.

An OUT administrator who has heard stories from women students, explained that

> getting time to study and work, and staying up very late at night and getting up very early morning every day, particularly for secondary school teachers is very strenuous on the woman, it is difficult to keep the schedule plans going.

She pointed out that many women have to cope with single parenting even if they are married, because most husbands, more often than most women, travel away from their homes on their office duties, something which most husbands do not allow the same to happen to their wives. Even when the husbands are at home they do not usually help with child care and family care, while the wife have to also accommodate the husband's demands in marriage. Further still, women are limited by lack of reliable facilities such as day care centres where they can leave their children when they go to work, study, attend the regional centres or make the library errands to help them be able to combine their family responsibilities with work and study.

Another student related how her husband has also been a big problem, for when he is home he does not allow her to rest. She said, if he sees that she trying to study he would say, "Do you see me here. I need to be entertained."

Similarly, another student also found it impossible to work on weekends. She lamented that her husband would impose his controls often saying things like, "Ah, ah, school work! This you can do other days when I am not home. When I am home, I do not like you do that!"

Sometimes as she writes her assignments he would grumble:

> You may continue to do your assignments, I do not refuse you, but every thing I used to get in the family must remain unchanged. I am not going to accept services from my children.

On several occasions, she tried to study at night after she finished all her work, and everybody had gone to sleep, but he would turn off the lights claiming that the electricity bill is becoming too high, requiring that she study during the daytime. She complained that she could not study much during daytime because she was teaching full time as a primary school teacher, besides she had the five children, some cows, and the banana farm around the house to look after.

Several students told similar stories of being harassed by colleagues or superiors if they tried to study in their offices. As one explained, "They really do not see the need, and do not understand to respect one who is trying to do that." So she said she has stopped trying to study in the office.

One student she started her OUT studies when she was a primary school teacher, but after her husband died and she had to move back home to teach in a secondary school. She found herself teaching English for all classes in the school. This prevented her from having the time to do her studies well for often she had to take students' work home to mark so that the next day the class could continue using their exercise books. She found that the secondary schools did not have a sufficient library to help her prepare her English classes so she had to search for extra teaching materials from the Regional Library, and sometimes contact other nearby secondary school teachers to get some help. She found these demands too much when she had also to search for her own study materials, write her home assignments, search for part time tutors and take care of her family. Teaching in a secondary school did not improve her salary. The primary school teachers are better paid due to the mass system of promotions carried out for all primary school teachers in the country but secondary school teachers' promotions are based on individual credentials and sometimes the heads of schools do not follow up well in sending their reports to the Ministry of education as required, thus delaying their staff promotions, and others had personal conflicts that made the head not recommend her.

One Regional Director described these problems as the difficulties associated with trying to reconcile their home affairs and time for studies. For him, women were discouraged from continuing because of such family problems as well the study components that that require the student to be away from home such as the face-to-face sessions, the timed tests, science practical sessions and the annual examinations.

Lack of cooperation from husbands

As OUT regional directors and many women reported, many men would not allow their wives to enroll for university studies, and some demanded that their wives give all their salaries to their husbands before they can enroll with higher studies. Others are uncooperative and refused to spend money for their wives' tuition fees, while some

women complained of husbands not allowing them to participate in the regional activities.

A director described how some men would always come themselves to the regional centres to collect study materials for their wives but not allow their wives to come, and yet others would drive wives to the regional centre, and allow them only limited time of two hours only, and then drive them home. He explained a case where one woman married to a municipal water engineer, registered for the Law program. She paid the initial tuition fees of Ts. 40,000 and collected her study materials, but her husband would not allow her participate in the regional centre activities so as to enable her continue with her studies. The woman told the regional director's part time secretary:

> I want to see the regional director to tell him that I cannot proceed with studies this year because I have been so occupied with the domestic affairs, my husband does not allow me to come here to participated in my regional centre studies.

He said that as a man, and a regional director, he was very surprised to find a very educated and progressive husband like this city engineer not being able to understand his wives' needs for better education.

> You see, this is a wife of a chief regional engineer here in the municipality, what else can the OUT expect from the less educated people in the rural areas! This is what I call "wivu wa wanaume!" (meaning men jealous).

He elaborated on "men jealous." He said that this "men jealous" is so strong that husbands cannot even allow their wives to come to the regional centre to pick up their study materials. This man came himself several times to pick up the study materials for his wife. However, he told him point blank that:

> Mr. regional engineer, I wouldn't prefer to deal with a third party in our study business because there are also lots of counseling that has to go with it. O.K. the tuition fees is paid, and you are collecting the study materials for your wife, but please next time I would like to see her come here personally, for earlier she came here and started complaining that she is too busy with home chores etc., but she is the student, she should be able to come, - Jokingly I also made sure that I clarified myself telling him that my problem is not how she comes, you can come with her, you will be with me while I help the student with her studies, for I do not want to do this through a third person party.

From that day he has not seen the regional engineer or his wife [the student]. He sighed, saying:

> Those are the problems of men and their wives we regional directors have to deal with, and this is the second major problem limiting women from enrolling with the OUT after financial.

He continued to explain his encounters as a founding regional director. He said that the third major problem is, "just pure jealousy in the struggle of power control from men." He alleged that most men do not want their wives to be as educated as they themselves are. He put this precisely in Kiswahili saying that:

> Just "wivu," kuwa mwanamke akisoma kama mimi atashindana na mimi ndani ya nyumba!" (Meaning, just jealousy that if a wife gets as educated as the husband, she would challenge the husband authority in the family!)

A regional director discussed his conclusions about students who normally do not participate in their study centre peer group activities. In his experience, they fail to cope with their studies, not only because they are unable to understand the study materials, but also from not being skilled in distance learning study skills. In addition, they lack information about many things about the OUT including its operational arrangements, regional centre activity schedules (the OUT Almanac) and emergency changes on them, examination timetables, tuition fees payment arrangements and changes, and other important announcements made by the OUT through newspapers, radio or TV such as the changes of timed tests and examination, time tables and registration periods. For example, he reported that in 1998, one student in the foundation course traveled long distances from home coming to do the timed test only to find that it was finished a day before arrived. Although the student was a member of one of the most active study centres, she was not a regular participant in the study centre discussions. Also, the regional director reported that each year he got several people coming to his office asking to submit their application to enroll with the OUT after the registration deadline had expired.

Studying at home

A regional director who had to supervise a number of regions reported that women students complained of many difficulties and problems when they study and work as full employees, wives and mothers with children. The husbands' control over the wives forces many women to be so much dedicated to their home chores that they think they cannot find time to study. Also, many women complained of lack of electricity, or

other reliable means of light good enough for reading in their homes, offices, regional and study centres. Even those with electricity in their homes complained that they suffered from frequent electricity cut-outs or breakdowns. Some women explained that their husbands refused them permission to study over extended hours at night (which usually is the only best time they can study for extended periods of time when the children and everybody is sleeping) complaining of high costs with the electricity.

Many students claim that the best time they can study is at nights and on weekends, while they commit the day time to the office and family issues such as sending sick children to clinics, buying their groceries, going to banks, attending to their own children's issues at school, cooking for the family, cleaning the house and the compound and hand washing clothes. Many women students do not have water or electricity in their homes, therefore they have to collect water (which is mainly the role of the woman in a family) sometimes from very distant places, and cannot do much of the other work at night without much light in the houses. One regional director suggested that audio cassettes if provided with batteries could help the women combine some kind of the rest time they need in a day with some study at night by listening to the tapes while they lie down to stretch out the day's stress

One student described some of the major problems that she regularly experienced after she enrolled with the OUT. She said (with laughter):

> First is when you try to study at home, there are neighbors who want to come to talk with you at your home. When you tell them "I am busy, I have some reading to do", they do not understand you, they get surprised. So, I have to leave my work in order to talk to them. Therefore, this is also a big problem for I do not have the time, or the privacy I need to do the study in my house.

Through my own visits, I saw the difficulties that many women faced. In discussing the issues with another woman educationist, she commented:

> And a lot of the women, the ones we are saying cannot go to regular universities for example, do not even have the kind of homes that gives them the kind of privacy to study. But the OUT women students are women who are most likely still staying in a one bedroom or at best two bedrooms kind of houses, -the children with the extended family members together. And this is where OUT expects them to sit and do their studies.

She had a number of suggestions for OUT. She suggested a system of six months of

distance study followed by one month on campus. She believed donors would pay for this short-term support. She saw it as a way to provide peer support for women, enhance women's academic confidence, while providing the benefits of distance education flexibility. She also wanted the government to provide paid study leave to women for the six years of her degree since on-campus students get three years' full bursary. She suggested that the OUT provide community library services through mobile packets attached to local primary schools that don't involve students in travel, and she wanted the OUT to be more aggressive in exploring the use of learning technologies. She used the example of the African Virtual University and thought that LTs would make studies less stressful and cheaper for women. She stressed the need to experiment with new technologies and new ways of learning so as to meet the OUT objective "to provide opportunities for people to learn at their own place, time and pace," And she recommended that the OUT campaign in colleges, secondary schools, places of work, and churches to inform women about the OUT program and how it works, and encourage with generous scholarships obtained through international donors.

Lack of Social Support

These cultural expectations act as a deterrent to women desiring to go on to further study. Many are discouraged from pursuing university education and instead are forced to drop out. A fifth year education student and inspector of primary schools explained that one of the major problems for adult women in studying a university degree by distance is the many multiple types of discouragement she gets from everybody around her life (parents, husband, friends, relatives, employer, government, the training institutions, societal attitudes). For instance, she complained that her employer often did not give her permission to go for her second timed tests in September claiming that it coincided with the national primary school examination preparations and supervision, but she noted that other male officers, who were also studying with the OUT were not having similar problems with the employer. She explained that this shows that males in the society are encouraged and supported by all means to achieve in education when they themselves are ready to study, but this is not the same for a woman. Also she complained of discouraging words from some teachers and other fellow primary school inspectors sometimes laughing at her saying for instance in Kiswahili:

> Eeh! X, hivi unatafuta nini? Unasoma tu kila siku unasoma! Wewe ni mwananke nini unahangaika unasoma hivyo? Mwananke uendelee kusoma kiasi hicho! Hataa, mwananke unasoma sana kutafuta nini? (Meaning, Eeh, X, what are you looking for? You are studying all the time! After all you are a woman, what are you studying so much for? A woman studying all the time that much! No, a woman should not study that much, --- what are you looking for?)

When she inquired from them what do they mean by saying that and whether they meant a woman is not expected to study, she said that they would explain to her that first she is a woman, and she expects to get married one day, or get a man who would be willing to care for her, as such they felt that there was no need for a woman like her to trouble herself, using lots of her energy studying that much while she could get men to take care of her. So, she complained that she personally gets really discouraged by such words from other people, especially when those telling her that are fellow women and actually teachers with good diploma certificates in education. She complained that it becomes very difficult especially when she has to also request their help to swap duties as her employer demands she do when she has to go for her regional centre activities, particularly the timed tests and annual examinations which last for a long time.

A fourth year education student explained that there were two problems for women: time constraints and financial difficulties. She complained that coping with the hassles to manage care of her children, the husband and the family; together with working full time, studying and doing extra tuition and other small family economic projects to raise money for the OUT fees and for paying for transport, accommodation, food and medical care during the Regional centre activities was very stressful.

She said that studying while staying home, for a woman is very, very difficult to perform well because, children and the husband do not normally consider that as a mother and or wife you are studying and you need more time, therefore allow the time needed to concentrate with studies. Also, by traditions, relatives, neighbors, friends do not real consider that a married woman will be studying and have no time to fulfill her traditional courtesy when they visit her family and vice-versa. She does not get time to prepare well for her studies because of her many roles in the family, as a wife, mother, and community member.

One woman educationist complained saying that if a Tanzanian man could understand that his wife is studying, then he could help her do some of her multiple roles

in the family, or at least accept that food be prepared and his clothes be washed by somebody else in the family. A fifth year education student presented a case of her study subject-peer to indicate how some husbands can be demanding to a wife in a marriage. She narrated:

> So, sometimes she used to get very disturbed by her husband although she was very lucky for her husband encouraged her to enroll with the OUT studies. But even though he was encouraging to her studies, there were other times he would just create lots of trouble, for instance he would tell her, "Aaah, ---today, I want you to take care of me as your husband." Then he would make lots of demands some of which are quite trivial until by the time the wife wants to study she is tired and upset by the stupid demands.

His demands included things like cooking, serving the food for him, sit with him while he eats until he finishes and she remove the dishes, preparing the bathroom and water (consider that most families do not have running water in their homes). Then just keep him company in the evening until he is ready to go to bed, and may demand that he must be accompanied to bed. She complained that he does this until he feels satisfied and can allow her to go to do other tasks. I further still probed to understand why men do that to their wives. She justified that saying "most men do that to show their authority and power over their wives as they married them."

Many women students and non-students from various parts of Tanzania also complained that they found that most OUT learning activities conflicted with their husbands' demands. This was because they were offered during weekends when most husbands are at home and would like to have family get-togethers and entertainment that are normally the work of a woman to facilitate. They complained that husbands usually refuse to let them do anything apart from family and marriage tasks particularly on weekends, and demand loud their right to be entertained as husbands when they are at home regardless of their wives' studies. This makes it difficult for the wives to refuse or ignore the demands since culture and religions also supported that wives be subject to their husbands and obey them. Most of them complained that they felt disoriented in studying with the OUT.

One educationist grumbled that as it is now, the OUT programs are best suited for men because many of them are employed in better paying jobs, they have the power to demand from their wives extra money out of their salaries and service in the family, or

they can easily just abandon providing for the family while they study. Also they can afford the extra time to cope with the extra study demands of distance learning because they do not have multi roles in their families and society. She claimed that distance studies might be even better for men than the on campus studies because it provides for the man to enjoy the wife doing everything for him while he concentrates on the studies, while on campus, men would have to do at least their own washing, cleaning of their rooms, and even cooking as far as the Tanzanian conventional university environments are concerned.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains a summary and an analysis of the major findings of the study and recommendations for practice and research. First, a brief summary of the findings concerning the barriers and difficulties is presented. These are then discussed in relation to the literature in order to provide a broader base for the recommendations. The recommendations are organized in response to two questions: What can the OUT do to enhance the enrollment of women? and what can the OUT do to improve the learning conditions and study experiences for the women students?

Summary

The summary and discussion are based on the research questions: What barriers keep women from enrolling for higher education with the OUT? What difficulties do women students experience while studying with the OUT? Barriers were considered to be those circumstances which prevented or constrained women from enrolling with the OUT while difficulties were those which hampered their learning and their continuing with their OUT programs. The data were gathered over an 18 month period through visits to 17 of the 21 regional centres of the OUT and through two separate focus groups of women and regional directors organized in Dar-Es-Salaam. I discussed barriers and difficulties with over 80 women students and non-students and interviewed approximately 150 respondents including women students and their non-students close fiends or relatives, OUT full and part time regional directors, senior staff of OUT, and achieving women. From the interviews, two major themes were identified and sorted into barriers and difficulties. They are discussed in order.

Barriers to Enrolment

Generally, the study findings demonstrated that women experienced institutional barriers and societal barriers in enrolling with the OUT.

Institutional barriers

One major institutional (OUT) barrier, lack of adequate government funding, was identified by many participants in the study, both those employed by the OUT and by the women students. From OUT's perspective, lack of adequate funding prevented them from enhancing their services by improving those they are already offering and through using better communications, and also by employing newer technologies more appropriate to their learners. From the women students' perspective, the OUT's lack of financial assistance and inadequate support services were seen to prevent women from enrolling. For instance, since its inception in 1994, OUT has not been adequately able to help women students experiencing financial difficulties by waiving their tuition fees or providing for their overhead costs. Lack of adequate funding has compelled the OUT to operate commercially, something which prevents it from being able to waive tuition fees, or provide for the students' overhead study costs such as for participating in the science practical sessions, regional and study centre activities.

Unfortunately, in the mid-1990s, when the OUT was getting established, the World Bank and the IMF inaugurated a financial liberalization initiative throughout Tanzania. The liberalization policy increased the prices for everything in the country. The OUT was thrown into a major financial dilemma, both for its day to day running costs, such as paying for its building rents and amenities (telephone, electricity and water), as well as for its program development, such as writing study materials, hiring sufficient staff, and purchasing and/or duplicating study materials obtained from other distance teaching universities. For instance, the National Radio demanded that the OUT pay Ts150 million to air only one half hour program per week. Similarly, the audio cassettes bought from University of Nairobi in 1995 to be used in OUT programs could not be dubbed until recently when the David Anderson Africa Trust Fund helped the OUT build its own studio on site. The OUT could not afford these costs, and the government could not provide extra funds to the OUT to augment its operational budget. Unfortunately, when the research was conducted (1999-2000) the situation had not changed.

In addition, the OUT lacked sufficient publicity to be able to market its programs to the Tanzanian public and increase its enrolments. Most of the OUT applicants already

hold a variety of diplomas and certificates, and are employed in different urban and rural parts of the country, many of them remote from the OUT headquarters and regional centres. As the OUT staff indicated, the OUT recruits most of its students between April and August each year. It normally publicizes itself by making announcements in its Almanac in the OUT prospectus, advertising on the National Radio and in newspapers, and distributing posters in national offices, regional centres, and other urban and rural public places.

The application process is complex. Applicants are required to send application letters and a fee of Ts3, 500 to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic in Dar-Es-Salaam. The OUT then responds to the applicants' letters by sending them the OUT application forms, including the OUT prospectus; a General Information Booklet; and the Students' Handbook. These are to help them identify programs in which they wish to enroll, and they provide other basic information about the OUT such as the tuition fees, the academic year calendar, and the OUT operational procedures. Applicants then return the completed forms to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic. He identifies the successful candidates and writes to them directly, informing them of the joining instructions. The names of successful applicants are usually published in the government papers, and are sometimes announced on the National Radio.

In January the OUT academic year begins with the University conducting a one-day orientation session in all its regional centres, and at the Dar-Es-Salaam OUT headquarters. Orientation sessions are normally conducted by the OUT Regional Directors, with the help of specially selected invited guest speakers (usually a Regional Education officer of the Ministry of Education, or a government Regional Development Officer). Students are informed how the OUT operates and are also told who is who at the OUT, and how to use the study materials. Those who pay the required tuition fees of at least 60% of the total Ts120, 000 per year usually are provided with study materials and assignments for the whole year, when available. Students are also strongly advised to participate in all the regional centre activities, and are encouraged to form and or join a local study centre.

The efforts the OUT puts into managing its publicity, recruitment, orientation, counseling and guidance of its students each year was seen by participants as insufficient

in a number of ways. First, the OUT was not seen to publicize and explain its existence, and thus many women were not aware of OUT, and therefore indirectly were denied the opportunity to enroll. In my discussions with them, it was evident that despite the orientation sessions and the handbooks, many women did not really understand how the OUT operates and what was required of them; as a result, many of them go dormant or drop out immediately after the orientation session.

Among the major reasons given for many women not knowing of the OUT's existence are circumstances such as the OUT announcements on the National Radio, in newspapers, and even on TV not reaching many people, especially communities in rural and remote areas of Tanzania. Also, regional directors have not been able to travel throughout their regions due to the lack of reliable transport and feeder roads, and the time involved since they work single-handed. In addition, many rural families cannot afford to have a radio, TV, or newspaper and may seldom travel (due cost and culture) to the regional centre in their district. It was also clear, that even when the participants had heard about OUT, many did not understand what was meant by a distance learning university and that most of the OUT's publicity is geared more to prospective students than to raising public awareness about the university and its operations.

Many women students did not know how to study at a distance. One of the major reasons given for this lack of understanding was the one-day orientation provided by the OUT. This, many women students and the regional directors explained, was too short and did not explain enough to help women understand how to effectively combine the OUT studies with their multiple roles in the family and society, and their full employment. Some students still sought face-to-face tutoring rather than individual study. Similarly regional directors explaining the same problem mentioned that financial constraints and the newness of the distance teaching mode prevented many women from enrolling with the OUT. In addition, regional directors observed that many women were not allowed to attend the orientation sessions and other OUT activities in regional towns.

Both regional directors and the Dean of Students mentioned difficulties in traveling throughout their regions to speak to students and potential students. The Dean of Students noted that since her appointment, she has not had sufficient funding to be able to visit the regions to talk to students, particularly women students. She said that women

students needed much sensitization and encouragement because, unlike the male students, they do not have the time and permission to meet with the regional directors. The men are able to meet and discuss their studies and how the OUT operates with other senior students or the regional directors in bars and other public places denied to women.

Two other institutional barriers were identified. Some participants commented on the predominantly male administration of the OUT and the lack of role models in leadership and administrative positions. OUT staff mentioned the poor educational background of many women students as a barrier. They acknowledged that poor preparation and lack of support in secondary school limited women's options and likelihood of success in higher education. Some suggested that the women lacked motivation, confidence and curiosity and were therefore unlikely to succeed in higher education.

Societal barriers

Tanzanian women's lives are profoundly influenced by the cultural expectations and religious beliefs of their families and communities. I found that some women did not enroll because they saw themselves as already burdened by too many societal expectations. Many women respondents observed that generally women are encouraged or thrust into early marriages and this has removed their opportunity for university studies. Not only were there problems associated with having too many roles in their family and society and that many of these were seen as "women-only problems", but men controlled women's lives in their communities, employers controlled women at their work places, and there was little societal support for women's problems or concern for the education for women.

Tanzanian society considers women's major role to be child birth and rearing of children. Many people believe that all girls must bear children in formal marriages and so, early marriage for women is encouraged. Taking care of children is considered to be women's work, and entirely ignored by men--a cultural taboo that is strongly enforced by family, society, and government. This role limits the time and energy women have to think about and or do well in university studies. In many parts of Tanzania, men expect their wives, even if they are employed and/or studying, to be the sole social foundation of their families. Once married, they are expected to do all tasks ascribed to women. This entails house cleaning; cooking; and washing; caring for the husband, the children, the

old, and the sick; and attending to visitors, as well as looking after the farm, the animals, and the small economic projects in the family. Society expects men do more "specific" tasks (shughuli maalum), such as wage earning employments and or business affairs. In comparison, if men are students, they have time to concentrate on their academic work and consult other students.

Although many women students identified specific barriers limiting enrollment and effective participation at the OUT, the most limiting factor for many women was the lack of support for girls' education in society. In the family not only were boys given preference when funding for education was limited, but also girls were not encouraged because they were going to leave the family at marriage and this was tantamount to transferring wealth from their own families and clans to their husbands' families. Fathers, whose wealth was based on numbers of cows often refused to educate their girl-children because it spoiled their chance of arranging the traditional marriage with its dowry of cows. In addition, the culture prevents girls from being able to get the traditional extended family support usually given to most boys by relatives who might be financially capable and willing to extend help when approached.

The preference for early marriage, which is supported by traditional and religious cultures, also discourages higher education for girls. This is fueled by a belief that highly educated women may challenge the male dominance in the home over marriage and family issues, or obtain better paid employment and so spend less time at home being with the children, organizing the daily chores and ensuring a pleasant environment for the returning spouse. In addition, many parents support early marriages because they fear that in pursuing higher education their girls will become pregnant or engage in inappropriate behavior and bring disgrace to the family, or marry a stranger who will be difficult to interact with the in-laws in taking care of them. Finally, girls who choose to continue in school are labeled poor marriage partners and not beautiful enough to attract male attention for marriage. All together, these attitudes pressure many girls to consider early marriage while they are still in secondary school and discourage parents from paying for girls' education.

Due to the cultural traditions which emphasize that girls keep a low profile in public and do not challenge male family members, girls who continue in school can find

it difficult to be successful at university and in the job market. In situations where competition with men is inevitable, girls rely on their cultural norms. Since most teachers and employers are male, they tend to reinforce the gender stereo-typing and increase the probability of the girls' failure. Recognizing the likelihood of having to compete with males without any social experiences about how to behave in such situations, some girls who could have entered university choose early marriage instead. This also contributes to parents' reluctance to encourage girls to seek further education.

This attitude towards girls' lack of coping skills was reflected in some of the comments of the regional directors who believed that women had less experience than men of studying independently and organizing their lives to include studying. For them, this was the reason so few women enrolled in OUT programs and why those who enrolled dropped out. What actually affected women were the experiences of peers. Several non student women explained that they were scared to enroll with the OUT especially after observing other enrolled women experiencing difficulties in coping successfully with the system. Several other women students explained that they too had been uncertain whether to enroll even after they had been much encouraged by relatives and other women students. Regional directors explained that the cultural and religious prohibitions prevented them from providing additional orientations since many women were forbidden from attending the regional centres and the directors could not visit the women in their homes.

Most regional directors and women students noted that, employers limited the number of employees (particularly teachers in private schools) who could enroll with OUT because the OUT model compelled them to be away frequently from their jobs. Employers complained of them under-performing and thus negatively affecting their institutions. Employers including the government have begun refusing to give permission for their employees to miss their duties on study grounds, or asking for education financial support from their employers. Women students noted that for the private sector employees enrolling with OUT endangered their hire. Some women students observed that their personal commitment as teachers was affected. They noted that morally they felt they were not doing justice to children they were teaching when they had to divide up their time and energy between teaching them and their own studies.

Women students also observed that employers preferred giving support to male workers than to their women employees. The women often got into conflict with their bosses who demanded rewards in kind for granting them permission. Some employers, especially those with the government institutions where the law provides for rights of in service training of all workers in the country found themselves being committed to frequent transfers by the hiring institutions when their employers realized that they had enrolled with the OUT.

Difficulties Experienced

Generally, the study demonstrated that women experience two major types of difficulties as they try to study with the OUT. These are concerns related to distance education and the OUT course delivery model and constraints linked to the juggling of social demands and lack of support for themselves as learners.

Operational difficulties

Some regional directors were unable to name any women students in their region and those who knew of names often had no contact with them. The directors often lacked accurate student information from the OUT and there was no computer database which they could access for updates. Because of the low numbers of OUT women students overall, for those women who did go to centres there were usually few or no peers which placed them in large groups of male students and isolated them further. Those who were unable to attend the centres, had even less opportunity to discover how the OUT system worked, and what was expected of them. These women were also not able to access subject peers, tutors, counsellors, or library support. They had no one to turn to and felt very isolated which raised their own uncertainties about persisting with their studies. The requirement to attend OUT regional centre activities conflicts with one of the major objectives formulating the OUT, "to enable Tanzanians do their university education as they continue with their nation building (work) and care of their families."

Many women students spoke about their difficulties in accommodating to the different method of study and of the problems imposed by the OUT timetable of regional centre visits for tests, tutorials, resources and examinations. Many were unable to go to the centres. Reasons included distance, their spouse would not give permission to travel,

or their employer would not give them time off, they had insufficient funds, they were unable to find and pay for adequate childcare or the travel, accommodation, meals and health care arrangements at the regional centre made it impossible for them to feel safe. Also, because there were no childcare facilities at the regional centres, most OUT students who were pregnant women, nursing mothers, and women with small children were generally absent from the regional centre activities.

Women found a major problem was juggling between competing demands. Husbands didn't want their routines disturbed and tried to force women to choose times when they were away from home for study. Because of their own schedules, women found it hard to handle the additional stress caused when instructional materials arrived late, assignments were not returned, or they had had no feedback before the final examination. Some who had found women study peers, explained that having help and assistance from other women students was very beneficial for them in providing support, and confidence in their studies and safety in numbers when they were traveling. Coincidently, the support groups also helped to recruit other women students.

Stories from many women students also indicated that the OUT lacked quality management of its programs. Further they observed that, the university was not accountable because while many of its students paid full fees, not all received their study materials.

Personal difficulties

Besides having difficulties with the OUT course delivery in the context of maternal and economic roles enforced by the culture, women found that these same social demands provided both competition for their time and discouragement of their aspirations.

The competing social demands were evident in the pressures on women to do their studying at a time that did not inconvenience their husband, children, family members or employers. They told many stories of having to rise early or go to bed late in order to try and study when the house was relatively quiet. Those who were able to attend regional centres commented that even these were not good places to study because the library had insufficient study resource materials so that they had to carry all their books and files with them as they traveled back and forth.

The six to eight years that it took to complete a degree seemed a long time and many wished they were able to attend a traditional university for three years instead so that they would be able to rear their children without the extra burden of studying and paying fees. The stories of how some women managed to juggle children, employment and studying were astounding. In some cases, husbands had left the marriages because of their studying so the women had to pay for everything themselves. In Tanzania, there is no legal support for married women's welfare and childcare payments from the father. Women indicated that while they understand the value of university education, and the importance of the OUT in providing opportunities for most women to achieve their university education, they insisted that the OUT operational arrangements were not flexible enough to help with their problems. They believed that the OUT needed to deal with women's education problem as a single issue with multiple, and complex problems rather than dealing with one problem at a time. It is evident from the stories told that many of the issues are intertwined; the socio-cultural and religious context puts constraints on women that prohibit them from taking advantage of OUT programs but OUT programs are not designed to reflect the needs of women and in issues like funding neither the OUT or the women feels that there is adequate support to provide a quality service for women throughout Tanzania. Nevertheless, the OUT is concerned to improve its services and women are encouraging others to persist in order to ensure that the opportunities for education provided through the OUT is not lost. These issues are discussed in the next section.

Discussion

The findings of the study confirm and reflect the work of a number of writers, researchers and reporters on education in Africa. (Haughey & Phillips, 2000; Kamau, 2001; Mhehe, 2001; Spronk, 2001; Usman, 2001). Many writers have noted major obstacles to schooling for girls and education for women in Africa to be mainly due to a number of factors. First is the burden of social stratification (MINEDAF VII, 1998, pp. 14-20; Synders and Tadesse, 19995; Mbughuni, 1994) which generally refers women to marginal positions in their society (Mbilinyi, Mbughuni, Meena, and Olekambaine,

1990), then the stereotypes conveyed by traditional methods of socialization which strengthen individual representations in gender (Athmani, 1996; Kalugula, 1990, Katabaro, 1990; Kassimoto, 1990, Mbughuni and Chilla, 1990), as well as early marriages and close-space births which are tied to the preservation of family honour (Mushi and Puja, 1990) but are also observed to be a direct result of low levels of education, and certain religious beliefs against the practice of family planning. The writers acknowledge that when girls attain high levels of education, it has better impact on their health and well-being as well as on their offspring's health and education. These issues are also the focus of this discussion.

Institutional Issues

From the women's stories and the discussions with OUT personnel there were two major reasons why so few women have enrolled with the OUT. First, the organization itself is under-funded and unable to adequately publicize its programs so women, especially those in the more rural areas, did not know that OUT was available for them. Second, the present publicity focuses on inviting people to apply and then advising successful applicants of the orientation session. There is little information explaining what distance education is or how it works and what it requires from students. This was evident once women enrolled and went to the first session; many dropped out soon after because they were unable to understand the system. First, they were unable to ask others about the process because of their own isolation, both physical and social. Then their uncertainty was compounded by this isolation and not having a close fellow student to consult. Their lack of confidence meant that when difficulties arose, their response was to drop out rather than persist. This lack of understanding of the system and lack of a peer group were mentioned by Kamau (1995) and others as common reasons why students returning to learning who choose distance education do not persist. Bhalalusesa (1998) in discussing experiences of learning at a distance at the university level in Tanzania noted that successful learning at a distance depends not only on the ability of the learner to pursue self directed learning, but also on the nature and quality of support obtained from the immediate social environment and the educational institution that supports the learning. (p. ii)

OUT financial concerns also presented women with difficulties. Although the committee setting up the university had thought their fee scheme was reasonable, it was set based on the average income without regard for the differential incomes of male and female workers. Lack of sufficient operational funding prohibited the OUT from providing bursaries to any large number of women students to help them pay fees, or to reduce fees for those in need. At the same time women found the fees hard to save given their other financial responsibilities for the home and the children. A number of women had to drop out because of they were unable to meet the fee schedule. In addition, women who did pay fees complained that they did not receive all their instructional materials and so found themselves disadvantaged in trying to complete their courses. University personnel admitted that the pay scheme they used to hire academics from other universities as course writers had resulted in many programs having gaps in their instructional resources. The issue is again one of under-funding, whether to purchase materials from other African distance universities or to provide appropriate remuneration to course writers. In addition however, the university did not seem to have a coherent plan for addressing these issues. Rumble (1992) discussing consumer characteristics in the management of distance learning advised that: those setting up and managing distance learning systems need to have a clear idea of the characteristics of their consumers, whether these are individuals or firms. This is vitally important, since it will determine not only what course they are likely to want, but also what kind of delivery and support systems will be needed, and what level of fees or charges is acceptable. (p. 25)

The distance education model used raised financial and organizational issues. Besides their lack of previous exposure to distance education, many of the women persisted in their studies. Their difficulties came partly from the structure of the course delivery. Materials were sent by post or bus and many were not received until the OUT began to send the materials to regional centres in bulk and encouraged the students to obtain the materials from there. The students were used to studying in groups or classes; because of the independence of the study system, they tended to put aside their studying in favor of other family activities. Muro (1988) noted that lack of motivation could also be a factor when isolation was present. Kamau (1995) also raised this point. Discussing distance education problems in Kenya she noted that it is important in course design to

listen to the needs of potential and actual learners before course designing and implementation in order to assess the support services required (p. 262). She explained that the learner's aspirations, experience, geographical environment, family commitments, social and economic background determine the quality of course design and support services needed by the learner. She explained that such problems need immediate action with an understanding that the purpose of the support services and the needs they were intended to meet in each student would vary according to each learner's requirements as demanded by the institution which would have known earlier. She explained the ways many institutions provide their support services and said that, many institutions tend to provide support services that enhance and facilitate effective teaching and or learning by reducing the distance between learners and tutors, and the host institution as a whole. This practice is aimed at minimizing dropout rates. These back-up services are therefore intended to provide the learners with the feeling that they are supported in their studies by the system that –teaches them what they want to learn, provides study materials that teach them effectively, marks their work thoroughly and reasonably, returns their marked assignments promptly, answers all their queries immediately, above all, shows interest in their personal problems and general welfare as distance learners (p.263). Further, citing Gitau (1994), Kamau (1995) suggested that to avoid too many problems and costs, the study centres be well equipped with the required references so that students could use them regularly. However, she noted that most study/regional centres have had many problems in handling students' marked assignments and other study needs. While postal services were fairly accessible, they were not used by many students as they are not really reliable. She noted that students found distance study materials useful and appropriate, but the support services do not meet many of the students' requirements, as most students live far from the host institution, and or regional and study centre, therefore they are not regularly accessible owing to distance, family, occupation, and financial constraints. She made very serious recommendations of the factors when planning distance education programs to avoid large numbers of student dropouts. Although Kamau did not make distinctions between women and male students' responses, but it is important to consider the differential effects of distance, family, occupational and financial needs on women students

In addition, Katabaro (1990, p.12) and MINEDAF VII (1998, p.14) observed that major factors affecting women's dropout and achievement in education were school -related factors such as the curriculum, the design and provision of instructional materials and the teaching methods.

The OUT system uses a series of assignments which are done at home and sent to the course tutor, a series of tutorials which are offered at regional study centres, and at least two timed tests and a final examination which are held at the regional centres. Additional library materials are also available at the regional or local study centre. This model would seem to provide for a combination of independent and group work, some done at home alone and some completed in cooperation with peers at study centres. However, while this model may be appropriate for males in Tanzanian society, it does not take into consideration the position of most females who are under the control of their husbands and or fathers. These women cannot leave home without permission, protection and funding from their spouse, father or elder brothers; have to be accompanied by a male family relative and are not allowed to participate in activities with males without their escort being present. Even then, many women were not allowed to participate in the OUT regional activities if the tutors were males. Married women students have to expect that their husbands will allow them 14 days' living in guesthouses, or unsafe hotel rooms in regional towns doing science practical, or timed tests, or an annual examination with almost entirely male adult peers, students, and tutors who attend without their wives, and to accept that a major objective for the OUT having them in the regional towns is academic socialization. This has not been accepted by many husbands, and has been the major reason for many women not enrolling.

The situation limiting women is a combination of traditional patriarchal and religious strictures and needs to be addressed by the OUT. Not only are women unable to make the frequent visits required, often over considerable distances, but they cannot afford to take the time away from their families or afford to pay for the travel and accommodation involved as well as childcare for their children. It is important that the course model is one which provides opportunities rather than obstacles for learners. Goma (1998), explaining the role of the university in Africa said that the university has a role in the education sector everywhere, but insisted that the actual nature, extent and

significance of the university's role depends upon particular circumstances –local needs, available resources, good planning, political support, and competent leadership. He added, "whether such role is readily and widely accepted, and valued by the society at large, depends on the standing of the university and the esteem in which the institution is held by that society" (p. 82). In the same vein Athmani (1996) discussing gender and women's image in the media in Tanzania advised that, if we are to make progress towards a society without gender barriers the government, religious bodies and communities should be sensitized so that they become aware of the anomalies, and take the necessary actions for the benefit of the nation at large (p. 74). The UNESCO Seventh Conference Report for Ministers of Education of African Members States (MINEDAF VII) (1998) noted that access to education for all in African encompasses:

> possibilities offered to people to acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in a systematic and harmonious manner and to ensure their overall personality development, a concept to be derived from different observations. First, physical and social access dealing with the location of education facilities, both of which can facilitate or hinder access to educational opportunities. Second, the psychological and sociological factors. Among these factors, the manner in which target audiences, for various reasons (religious, cultural, etc), do not accept the educational programs, thus hindering or catalysing access, for well known examples for psychological barriers to education are gendered-insensitive curricula and teaching methods, and educational programs that have little bearing on local realities and traditional cultural values. Third, the economic dimensions which are more striking in Africa, where financial and opportunity costs are very serious problem to poor families and communities (p.14).

Utne and Posi (1990) and Cooksey et al. (1993) have argued that in increasing educational services in Tanzania to ensure sufficient accessibility, it is essential to also create conditions for reducing gender disparity in education so as to make the services effective. Similarly, the Tanzanian Association for Development of Research in Education for Girls (TADREG) (1990) argued that gender disparity in educational performance and achievement must involve analysis of immediate factors in the home environment and basic factors embedded in the overall socio-cultural and economic environment. They further argued that while the economy may determine the quality and quantity of educational services provided, non-economic factors may determine the demand and therefore the effective use of these services. As such participation or non-

participation of girls in education and the level to which they are encouraged to achieve will be greatly determined by the life opportunities in their societies, and the gender-related expectations of their parents and communities. Barbara et al. (1991) explaining from parents' perspectives, the dilemma of the economics of poverty and the underlying traditions in many places of the world, argued that, male education may understandably be seen as a better investment than female education. As such, they noted that to create a stronger case for parents' sending their daughters to school, policy makers should recognize the costs and benefits from the parents' perspective--that if parents incur greater costs to educate girls, but society reaps greater gains, then governments ought to consider special measures and targeted subsidies to help girls attend school in such circumstances (p. iii).

Peer groups are an important part of the OUT model. However, the present structure makes them inconvenient or forbidden to many women students. Alternatives which would link together women in local geographical areas need to be considered. While the regional directors are often not able to name the women students in their regions, and seldom travel outside the centre to local study centres, women also sometimes do not use more than an initial plus their family name on their registrations in order not to be seen to flaunt their gender or invite unwelcome conversation from non-family males. Again the stories of husbands picking up materials for wives who were subsequently forbidden from attending the centre reinforced the difficulty in identifying and communicating with women students when the director is male. von Prummer (1988) noted that women in developing countries are affected by barriers such as problems related to distance, time, inadequate support, unsatisfactory tutorials, lack of child care services and conducive study and learning space (p. 57). She attributed this to the economic conditions, the organizational conditions of the educational systems, and the traditional roles binding women to the roles of becoming wives, mothers raising children, and being home makers. However, von Prummer's (1988) research in Germany found that most women's programs are characterized by large student dropouts; failure to graduate in the minimum or even maximum time (6-8 years) provided; intermittent student support services such as face-to-face-sessions and a heavy dependence on residential components including privately arranged form of tuition. The high student

dropout rate was problematic to both the universities and to the students. She said, as far as students were concerned, important issues were: attrition rate and the problem of identifying factors which contribute to retention or dropout; women, more than men, preferred to study in groups and to have contact with other students and staff; most married women are not employed, therefore did not have money to pay fees; delayed awareness and consideration of the time and work-load involved in doing the studies as opposed to the material gains, and working mothers considered higher education not rewarding especially when they had to undertake double, triple, or even more roles at the same time (p. 57). von Prummer's (1998) research also revealed that women were more affected by factors working against continuation. She noted that only very determined women were able to access, participate and successfully complete higher education studies through using distance methodologies. She suggested that in order to improve women's enrollment, effective participation and successful achievement, the barriers limiting capable determined women must be addressed.

Lack of access to resources was another issue raised by the women. They could not travel to centres due to cultural, religious, or economic reasons. The lack of additional resources and the subsequent overdependence on the print materials not only limits the learning in the course but also is likely to make the learning more repetitive and boring. Access to additional resources is an ongoing issue for African universities.

Srisa-an (1986) in discussing distance education through multi-media at the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University noted that open education emphasizes various types of educational media, as application of advanced knowledge or technology to education, to have students study to the fullest extent on their own without having to enter a conventional classroom (p11). Mcharazo (1999, pp 4-5) noted that establishing an institution which offers educational programs is one thing, and understanding the requirements of the community to be served is quite another. In Africa, particularly Tanzania, the practice is that user studies have not been given the weight they deserve, the provision of information is done haphazardly and it is not unusual to find in some schools that the most up to date literature available is over 10 years out of date (Mchombu, K.1989, p. 151).

Calder (1983, p.176) observed that for community education programs study materials must be based on the needs of the learners and on the problems they face in their day to day lives, while McElroy (1986 p. 35) noted that students experiencing reading needs do so from their previous need to pursue a course of study, and as such, their needs not only arise from finding bibliographic references, or such that would be readly satisfied automatically by access to a very large public library, but that different students in the same institution taking the same course at the same may experience different sets of needs. As such, adequate students' information needs are usually complex, and dependant on the student's environment, the study unit, and personal abilities and ambitions. However, John (1995, p. 40) discussing realistic alternatives for providing information services for distance learning education systems observed that in distance education, this provision is complex and varied, and depends on the scale of the institutional operation. The institutional community (students, tutors, researchers, etc.) normally introduces new information demands. These demands are the ones to which the institution must respond to.

At the OUT, Mcharazo (1999, p. 6-7) reviewed the Vice Chancellor's comments on efforts towards supporting OUT distance learners. Vice-Chancellor Mmari noted that the OUT has made full use of all possible existing facilities in the rest of the educational system in the country including the National Library Services "TLS"; courtrooms, schools, and colleges being used as information resources and study centres; science practicals being conducted in laboratories of existing universities; human resources from all other higher learning institutions are being deployed to write study materials and carry out tutorials and evaluation services. He noted,

> Tanzania with its very low technological development has managed to provide for the OUT distance students a range of facilities, and that the university utilizes a range of support services, including face-to-face-sessions, postal services, telephone, radio, TV, CD-ROMS, fax, computers, audio and video cassettes, and other plans underway to introduce more current and advanced LTs to its students though with extreme limitations. (Mmari, 1998, p. 2)

However, Mcharazo questioned the extent to which the mentioned LTs employed by the OUT are readily available and in the use of the actual learner.

While the OUT has been attempting to add multimedia to its courses, the lack of funding has made even the addition of audiotapes impossible. From my experience of being in many homes and centres where electricity was either unavailable or inoperable, the presence of electricity and of equipment such as cassette recorders needs to be considered problematic. In urban situations, some kind of access to power and equipment can be assumed and many women may have some access to computers. However, for the country as a whole, these technologies are still more absent than present and their use has to be considered optional rather than required. Kamau (2001) has pointed out that in Botswana, even radio transmission has to be reconsidered since some sectors of the country cannot receive the broadcast and with then privatization of radio stations, free or nominal cost educational broadcasts are being replaced by commercial programs with paid advertising.

Delays in obtaining marked assignments and lack of constructive feedback was another institutional issue related to the course delivery model. Many women were frustrated because their materials often arrived late, long after the initial starting date, compressing their time available for study and shortening their time for assignments. Some OUT personnel agreed that the system was not working well; they blamed the problem on the lack of sufficient tutors and study materials, students being inaccurate or careless in putting their names on assignments, and an inefficient postal service. While all of these are probable reasons, the policies of the university do not acknowledge the stress put on students or provide them with additional study time.

Perraton (1984, p. 69) in discussing training of teachers at a distance, noted that a tutor has a slightly different function from that of marking, that is to help build a relationship with the distance learner. Ligate (1998) explaining the essence of tutor-marked assignments in distance education, observed that unlike in conventional teaching where assignments are normally for evaluation of the student's understanding, in distance teaching assignments have broader functions including tutorials, dialogues, evaluation, promoting and maintaining active learning of the students, guiding and counseling. Tutor marked assignments provide the basic medium for tutors to enter into dialogue with distance learners to help them better understand the study materials by carefully and systematically identifying and advising on the gaps learners have to clear in the study

materials before examinations. Discussing assignments prior to submission gives a learner the chance to converse with the tutor and to receive advice on their study (Lewis, 1984), and in so doing it helps students alleviate their isolation and find more meaningful experiences in study.

Women also identified situations where there was deliberate discrimination by OUT staff. My discussions with male staff members also found situations where gender-biasing was evident. Most of these situations revolved around obtaining permission--to extend deadlines, or to seek additional support. The predominance of a belief in the course delivery model as well-designed, adequate and gender-neutral, meant that these officers made decisions without consideration and sometimes knowledge of the particular circumstances of women in Tanzania. For example, one OUT senior administrator, when explaining what he considered to be the major factors preventing many women from enrolling with the OUT, said,

> The distance education program is designed for those who are ready to push themselves rather than to be pushed by somebody. So our [OUT] responsibility is to provide the enabling environment and it is for the clientele to take the advantage of the environment that is provided. . . . So the responsibility rests on the target groups. The best we [OUT] could do within the system would be to raise consciousness, awareness of the existence of such programs, the levels, the potential, and maybe the benefits of such programs.

This statement takes the predominant view that the OUT need only offer the service: it is up to the women to apply. No consideration is given to whether they are free to make this choice. The Forum for African Women Educationalists [FAWE] (1998) argues that in

> planning for development of any project, it is necessary that there be equal participation of the decision making bodies; in this case, Tanzanian men and women must be equally represented if the project is to benefit all parties, thus be gender-free/not lopsided. (Pp. 38-40)

Since there are few women at the executive level or on the university boards, women students have few role models and their views are seldom heard enough to make an impact. The appointment of a female Dean of Students is a positive step but this appointment does not begin to address the systemic discrimination in the system.

One problem which the OUT staff identified was the poor educational background of many women applicants. This made their success less likely and more

recently, the OUT has begun to offer bridging courses to women so that they can be more adequately prepared for university -level work. For example, in the Sciences, many girls' secondary schools only offer Domestic Science and so girls have inadequate knowledge of chemistry, physics and biology when they begin their university courses. This issue is one that needs to be addressed by government. This gender-biasing of the curriculum needs to be removed if girls are to participate fully in all occupations in the sciences.

Kalugula (1990) in researching school curricula noted that after political independence, the colonial legacy of sex specificity in some courses in the schools was maintained. Girls were still denied access to technical education and had exclusive access to domestic science subjects (Tanzania Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 50). Katabaro (1990, p.12) who investigated the effects of curricular options on future career choices of girls, noted that diversification of secondary school education re-enforced the colonial categories of education such that the study of home economics was limited to girls only, something she found hindered efforts to bring equality in education for boys and girls.

She found that most rural girls began primary education at about ten years and completed at about seventeen years, the age when they are expected by society to be married, or get engaged to their life partners. She noted too that, despite several research studies addressing the question of school girl pregnancies, quite a high number of girls get expelled from school each year, and that the 1987/88 Ministry of Education record showed that 17 regions of the Tanzanian mainland reported pregnancy as a major cause of expulsion of girls from the school system in primary school education. Eshwan (1982), cited in Matiru and Gachuhi (1988, 137-138), noted that women are under-represented in science-based university studies. He argued that if women are to make their contribution to the development of African society they must participate in the more challenging and better paid careers as men do. But the reasons women do not participate in these careers are more complex than he portrays.

Gender-based Societal Issues

Much has been written about the socio-economic context of African women. Haughey and Phillips (2000) noted that understanding the gendered nature of the social,

economic, policy and technology systems which frame opportunities for women is key to assessing and promoting women's access to and use of ICTs. Women's needs for information are often influenced by their gendered roles and responsibilities, which in turn affects their use of and response to ICTs. In the education sector, women tend to have less access to education and training, and those who do continue in school tend to keep to socially accepted or peer-group non-technological streams – all this has long term implications for continued gender differences in access to and use of ICTs.

In most African societies, women's places are markedly distinct from that of men in almost all aspects of life. The perceptions of women's abilities, roles and needs are strongly held, defining the boundaries of both what women are expected to do by their communities and societies and what women expect of themselves –this has profound implications for the education prospects for girls and women right up the education chain. Similarly, Spronk (2001) commented that it is difficult to name the issues that arise for women in the developing world in and around the uses of technologies for learning given the complex, diverse, and multilayered realities of women's lives. Three issues are paramount: the number of roles required of women by society; the separation of roles which means that many issues are considered "women's only" issues, and the lack of support for women's education both from the community and the family.

In the Tanzanian context, all women are expected to marry and bear children, to rear the children and look after their needs including paying for their schooling, to undertake employment or small economic projects in order to have sufficient funds to do this, to be the social centre of the home including entertaining visitors and going visiting, and to attend to their husbands' every wish so that they will not leave and take another wife or remove their children from them. Many women who have had success in school see the OUT as an opportunity to obtain better employment and decrease their economic burdens. The cultural and religious norms of the community tend to reinforce these roles for women.

Nare (1995) in explaining the persistence of sexist and cultural stereotypes for an African intellectual woman noted that, generally the rate of illiteracy among girls is much higher than that of boys, and science and technological courses lead to higher prospects on the employment market, but very limited number of girls opt or have the opportunity

to opt for these courses. As such, employment options traditionally reserved for girls are downgraded, especially as they require fewer years of education, and therefore have lower salaries and less job security. On the other hand, although an assessment of the global production of women in both the formal and non-formal sector shows that it will have exceeded that of men by the year 2000, still the women's share of the riches and revenue remains inferior to that of men. This disparity reveals that the gap still exists between men and women in education and employment; and that women continue to be exploited and will remain, for a long-time to come, at the social and economic positions reflecting their subordination to men. What this indicates is that there are serious contradictions between political statements and the laws and their implementation. These distortions reveal the existence of obstacles which hinder the promotion of women. These obstacles are the deeply-rooted prejudices of the idea of natural inferiority of the woman and on the principle of a distinct distribution of specific roles and statues to each sex (p. 2).

Rao (2000, Pp. 246 - 249) explaining issues of gender, poverty and environment in developing nations stated that poverty has a woman's face. He made an observation from UNDP (1995) human development report that *human development, if not engendered, is endangered.* He noted that about 1.3 million people living in poverty 70 percent are women. He explained the problem to be rooted in gender disparities found in many of the socioeconomic systems. He noted that in Africa only about 10 percent of credit program beneficiaries go to women. He explained that women suffer underdevelopment from problems associated mainly with maternal-related morbidity and mortality, respiratory diseases caused by smoke from the cooking chore processes, and much indoor air pollution for much time they spend in the family houses with poor ventilation (an issue raised also in 1995 at the fourth world women's conference in Beijing), under-representation in primary school enrolment, with high drop out rates than are the male children at all levels of education, lower wages, longer hours of work with more stress than are men. He noted that although women support about 53 percent of the total burden of work in developing countries, about half their work is unpaid household or community work, and trends in literacy, life expectancy, and power enhancement show very slow improvements, while their contribution to the household and non-

household work outside the market assessments of wages and payments accounts for about two thirds of their national GDP (UN, 1995). He reported that ecofeminists observe the oppression of women and degradation of nature as theoretically, symbolically, and historically connected (Warren, 1987, 1990), and that the theory is understood by addressing the social inequality, women's historical lack of legal, property and political rights, their continued emberddedness in families and the denial of market value of much of their work. He reported that in most rural areas of developing countries, the number of women in poverty has risen by almost 50 percent in the last two decades and women contributing to about $11 trillion output in 1993 their contribution was not acknowledged in the accounts of the conventionally recorded output (UNDP, 1995). He explained that in order to have effective poverty reduction programs for women it requires careful examination of the gendered division of labor and decision-making both within and outside the household (UNDP 1997). He reported that research indicated that best women poverty reduction success involved women groups micro-credit banking, where in Bangladesh it illustrated that projects initiated in 1980, after 10 years only 20 percent of the women in the project still were considered poor as compared to 56 percent in the groups that were not in the project (Amin et al., 1994). Hence Rao (2000) cautioned that gender inequality remains to be a big problem affecting many women's socioeconomic status, not only in developing world, but globally, and that a number of measures and economic incentives are highly advised. He explained that the organization for economic cooperation and development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee (DAC) initiated in 1997 a set of guidelines to help its member countries incorporate policies on gender equality and women empowerment (ge/we) in a number of concerns such as capacity building, participatory development, and institutional development. He pointed out that, the financial incapacitation of women continued to add to those of the nature without any acknowledge by many people around them, and especially by those who consider and believe in power of business control for individual advancement.

The situation for African women is compounded by the relative separation of family roles. Because childcare, cooking, and other domestic activities are identified solely with women, men do not recognize the additional burdens women undertake when they add economic activities and education to their other duties. Men control women's

access to any activity outside the home since their permission and funding are required if women seek to travel since many women due to children care burdens are unable to save sufficient funds to meet their fees. In addition, the societal sexual mores for males ensures difficult situations for women who travel alone, and engenders distrust among husbands, further tightening the bonds against women's autonomy. While participants in the study explained that men argue their reasons for their decision not to allow their wives to travel to the regional centres as a means of protecting the women from the world and other males; the same decision can be seen as a way of retaining power over women's movements and curtailing their access to education which might give them economic freedom.

At the same time, the situation in many African countries is changing rapidly. Globalization, economic recession, new technologies and the knowledge revolution and the lethal AIDS epidemic are challenging women's traditional roles. Education for all members of the country is being seen as more important for health as well as economic reasons.

Recent research report on Tanzania and HIV/AIDS (http:/www.synergyaids.com/files.fcgi/585-Tanzania.PDF) indicated that key points in Tanzania's HIV/AIDS epidemic has increased alarmingly each year. The report explains that the epidemic is being driven by high risk *heterosexual* behavior, characterized by high incidence of sexual transmitted infections. The report indicates that 10 –12 percent of Tanzanian adults above 15 years of age are HIV positive, that an estimated 1.5 million Tanzanians of its population of about 39 million people are living with HIV, - and about 520,000 of them with AIDS. The report explains that, following the current trends this figure was expected to reach 2.4 million people by year 2000. The report indicated that, estimates show adult deaths rates are increasing at rates of about 50 percent from 1990, and is expected to be at that rate up to year 2010. As such, life expectance has been estimated to have dropped at rate of 20 percent in the 1990s, and will average at 46 years by year 2010. Women data derived from the antenatal sentined surveillance site indicate that the national HIV prevalence rates range from 10 –33 percent among pregnant women. This figure is alarmingly high, and the situation has reinforced the cultural mores of many men binding women indoors as they fear much exposure, especially of their

wives to the many adult men students of OUT in the regional centres which are in the regional towns and demand they spend nights in hotels/guesthouses during the OUT regional activities. However, the alarming situation is also a major indication that many women will remain single parents and or fail to consume any kind of marriage as expected by the culture, and this means women have to be less dependant on the men care as has been the tradition.

One of my concerns is with the current Tanzanian female employment trends. The 1990s have been characterized by mass retrenchments from employment. Women, by nature of their roles in the family and society as mothers, wives and sole people for raising children, are deemed less qualified to take up employment outside the home. As such, women are the first victims of these retrenchments unless the women seriously struggle more to return to school to improve their credentials despite the many other roles imposed on them by society and spouses. Young and Perraton (1980, p.1) noted that education increases people's physical and mental freedom and their control over themselves, their own lives, and the environment in which they live, while Nyerere cited in Young and Perraton (1980, p. 1) urged Tanzanians to invest in education for it has the power to liberate people. He said:

Man [Sic] can only liberate himself or develop himself. He cannot be liberated or developed by another. For man makes himself. It is his ability to act deliberately for a self-determined purpose, which distinguishes him from the other animals. The expansion of his own consciousness, and therefore of his power over himself, his environment, and his society, must therefore ultimately be what we mean by development.

The above stated freedom and control are difficult for Tanzanian women to attain to-date because the culture does not support women's desire for education. Unless society and communities are willing to accept the changes that women desire, there are not enough educational options available to women. It is only through such changes that I think women would be allowed to participate more equitably in the development issues that hold importance in their own lives such as attaining higher education through the OUT. For instance, the impacts of gender and culture have not only been practised in the families, but also expressed in textbooks, media, schools, government policies, social practices and in the societal pressure to maintain traditional roles. Women alone cannot

resolve these issues without clear deliberate support from society and government. I was surprised at how many of the OUT women students I met were widows, single parents, Catholic sisters, unmarried women in their late 30s and early 40s, or women whose husbands had retired. In each of the regional centres I visited, more than half the students belonged to these groups. Ironically, although the tuition costs are a serious hardship for these mainly single salary earners, their life circumstances have freed them from male control. If the OUT is to expand its enrolment of women, then it must recognize the present socio-cultural and economic realities for women and try to assist them through providing programming that is both accessible and realistic given their other life demands.

A third socio-cultural concern was the lack of support for women's education. Women told how they found that the traditional community cultures focused on women's roles as mothers and were unwilling to make space for women's personal concerns about education, development or economic empowerment. Regardless of the actual dynamics of the marriage, women were required to fulfill roles, which gave the man freedom to work and socialize. Hence, women seeking to study found it difficult to obtain emotional and social support even from female family members. Many women told similar stories about spouses who demanded that any studying be done while they were away from home. This set up a tension for many women between following their cultural mores by obeying their husbands and fulfilling their own desires for education. For those women who were employed, the lack of public affordable day cares, and the unwillingness of employers to release women for study travel further reinforced the minority position of women in the society and at workplaces.

There were many times during this research when I felt that the situation for Tanzanian women was impossible to overcome but the goodwill and the hopes of the women students keep me going. Changes to cultural expectations can only occur if the changes are promoted at all levels from government to the family. I believe that education itself will also help as Tanzania already learned from Nyerere (1968, p. 49) who gave the country years of free education in order to liberate all the people. If the OUT works within the social structures to give women the chance to be successful, then there is the possibility that the women will make sure that there are similar opportunities

available for their girl children by sensitizing, encouraging, guiding and counseling their daughter to take up post-secondary education with high aspirations and this has the potential not only to end the women's *oppression* in the near future, but also alleviate/eradicate the deep-seated, many years of *poverty* in many Tanzanian families, and put firm control on the escalating problem of the *HIV/AIDS*.

Chapter 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to ensure the conditions that will allow Tanzanian women to be successful in OUT programs, two sets of recommendations are proposed. The recommendations are organized in response to two questions:

First, "What can the OUT do to enhance the participation of women?"
The items regarding the question are those seeking how the OUT as *institution* can reduce the barriers arising from itself as institution of distance learning, and *societal* barriers linked to the distance leaning method, thus enhance learning for women students.

Second, "What can the OUT do to improve the learning experiences and study conditions of women students?"
The items regarding the question are those seeking how the OUT procedures (*operation*) for registration, teaching, training and evaluation can be made less stressful for women students to accommodate their way of life (which is *personal*) so they may cope better in studying at the OUT.

Reducing OUT/Institutional Barriers and Encouraging Enrollment

1. The OUT as a massive university education provider should provide to the general public more and better publicity about its programs and identify the needs of community development. Many women non-students acknowledged that they had *never* heard of the OUT programs and majority of those who knew declared its programs *irrelevant* and or *conflicting* with personal and or community aspirations. This involves changing and adapting the present marketing strategies to include the rural community church services through their respective religious institutions; and include colleges, secondary, and primary school teachers; workplaces in addition to the present regional and study centres.

2. The OUT should revise their publicity materials to provide more information about the OUT as a learning system and how it functions and the expectations from students. This information should include not only how the system functions but also what supports are in place to help students and considerations for gender equity. The OUT should consider putting this material on videotapes in cooperation with local drama, "ngonjera" poems and singing or musical groups to increase publicity and sales.

3. The OUT should consider taking "OUT columns" in newspapers or regular radio spots (funded by paid advertising if possible) where readers or listeners find out about successful OUT students and what they can tell others about distance studying, --how they studied, what they have achieved, as well as general study tips.

4. The OUT must address its funding issues and seek support from other partners and sympathetic donors such as World Bank, CIDA, COL, UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, Rockefeller Foundation, DFDI, ICDE, SIDA to ensure that it can provide what it promotes. This applies in particular to issues such as ensuring sufficient instructional materials and convenient to the women's needs, Learning Technologies such as emails, mobile cum community library services and computer aided programs especially for information updates provided in a reasonable time and with adequate numbers of appropriate (well oriented to teaching distance learners, highly motivated and who are gender aware) tutors who provide fast and useful feedback to students. This will help OUT role model convenient to women distance education where culture is a much limiting factor of freedom for movement and financial income for women. The participants argued that if the OUT is to teach by distance method, then it is supposed to reach its students in their homes and or workplaces at the students' convenient time and pace.

5. The OUT must explore alternative tuition support mechanisms for women. While those participating blamed the original (presidential) government committee founding OUT for not recognizing the differential wages of women, it is unlikely that the

government will be able to provide OUT with sufficient operating funds to eliminate tuition fees for all women wishing to study with the OUT. Hence, other strategies must be employed by OUT to ensure that its courses are not beyond the means of the very people who are its potential clientele, particularly women as the most marginalized in education and financially in the society. This may mean reviewing the OUT management systems to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency as well as employing partnerships with the willing public and private sectors in the country in order to support eligible students such as mothers, girls from low income families, women in the low and medium income employment sectors (nurses, teachers, secretarial workers, community workers, office attendants).

Rumble (1992) explained that, before an educational institution considers any fees for its programs it must well be informed of the financial ability of its prospective candidates (p. 25). OUT tuition fees need to be monitored so that they don't get out of line in inflationary times. The current OUT tuition fees are Ts120, 000. This is becoming too high. Many women told me that their families couldn't live off their monthly salaries. For many mothers, the opportunity to pursue university studies coincides with their children attending secondary school education where for government day schooling tuition fees alone are usually above Ts60, 000 per year which is well above the salaries of many women employees in the government sector. The participants described how diploma-certificated teachers, the group from whom most OUT students are recruited and where most of the better educated women are employed, have a government salary of about Ts45, 000 to 80, 000 per month, while teachers with degrees get between Ts60, 000 to Ts90, 000. In the marketplace, I noted that the minimum amount for a day's food for a family of five (a kilo of beef, Ts 1, 800; beans, Ts600; and maize meal, Ts350), would cost over Ts82, 500 a month, well out of reach of most salaries. Hence, many participants concluded that, if the major objective in founding the OUT was for the government to provide mass university education, particularly for the marginalized women, then the government should consider affirmative action in full removal of all OUT education costs for women in order to ensure that all women capable of enrolling for OUT university education,

regardless of their financial income, could enroll. They considered this to be a fair *acknowledgement* the society could offer women in support of their family nurturing commitments in the development of the society, in child birth and child upbringing, and in family care.

Reducing Societal/socio-cultural Barriers and Enhancing Participation

1. To address the poor education and cultural backgrounds for the many adult women masses, the OUT in revising its publicity materials should provide also information about how its learning system functions in helping to bridge and upgrade through its Foundation Course Program, continuing education Program, and the Youth program for the academically and socially limited women in the society. The information should include not only how the system functions in training, but also what supports are in place to help students and considerations for gender equity. Approaches such as focused drama, singing, songs, poems "ngonjera" in the community in special selected primary schools done by OUT students as practicum sessions in studies such as drama, English/Kiswahili literature; or as extra mural community activities in society that are organized and managed by the OUT through the regional directors office and students in the respective region to help inform society on various issues of development, publicity for OUT, as well socializing activity in the communities. The OUT should consider putting these activities on videotapes/audio cassettes for sale to increase publicity and raise funds for the regional center maintenance and sustainability.

2. The OUT through its continuing education and Youth programs facilitated secondary school girls free service extra tuitions especially in science subjects and English in the evening and children library cum playground for reading culture in community women only study centers since many parents do not provide girls with such support.

3. The OUT make "special campaign" to train for free all female teachers without degree in all girls secondary schools as an pre-requisite emergency requirement in improving women higher education in the country. This is an attempt to arrest further production of under qualified girls from secondary school education.

4. The government should revert to its old policy in regard to building more boarding schools in remote isolated places for girls' secondary and conventional university education to ensure more girls can have quick opportunity to be assisted to achieve their higher education, and the teachers can be more responsible in their duties to help the girls excel their talents, so as to produce quickly sufficient good quality role models for other parents and young girls in the society. This will help sensitize and encourage more girls to aspire for higher education, and parents, especially fathers to be willing to send their daughters for higher education as they will understand that their daughters are really attending schools where good learning climate for girls is maintained, and that fear of their girls dropping out of school due to pre-marital pregnancies, and or involvement in unwarranted sex with men during their school sessions would be much prevented.

5. The government should adopt affirmative employment for girls and women in better paying jobs and narrow employment gap between women and men in the society. This is in the effort to give relevancy to women higher education, since the society has much belief that the major role of women is to get married, give birth to children, bring up the children, and care of the family. This notion has much been encouraged by the government marginalizing women good job positions since independence. Most parents observe practically that they cannot depend on their girls' education development as is for their boys to support them their old age care and needs (since the culture does not practice old homes security services).

Reducing Operational difficulties and Constraints and Improving Learning Experiences and Study Conditions

1. The OUT must review its teaching and learning system to better meet the needs of women students in that it may allow them combine easily their study activities and care for their children and families. This suggests that the pedagogical system used (rigid schedules and nature of orientation sessions, face-to-face sessions, timed tests, science and teaching practical sessions, annual examination sessions) at the OUT must be extra supportive and flexible for women students for instance be offered several times than just

once, provide home services for sick and women in maternity rest periods, and be of different nature rather than just traditional examinations in paper and ink writing exercise, particularly for mothers with small children who form the majority of potential OUT women students, but who are also the most limited by culture and their husbands' control in their other many family responsibilities, and their situation is compounded by their inexperience in family management and escalating financial constraints. From the women's stories, it is evident that the present distance delivery model does not match the life circumstances of the women students. It is inadvertently gender biased and needs to be reexamined and alternatives determined.

2. Major changes are warranted concerning use of the regional centres as OUT nuclei for all university training activities: orientations, face-to-face-activities, timed-tests, science practical sessions, annual examinations, counseling and guidance services.
For most women regional centres are seen to be alien environments to their culture and traditions, and are places with demands outside their capabilities to fully afford, participate in, or cope with. The OUT needs to assess whether they can provide these services through other means or closer to the women's homes such as in community base "women only" study centres developed and facilitated with community cum mobile library service in very carefully selected primary schools in the communities where the women live.

3. The development of local community all-women study centres should be pursued immediately. Since the majority of women are controlled by their culture, religious influences, and husbands who have the final say in their lives, the OUT should understand the women's position, and make more efforts to provide women students with training in their home and community settings. These could be in their family communities in carefully selected centres, such as in primary school institutions where most women usually have easy access and contact, so that women, particularly married women and mothers are able to access all their study requirements within walking distance at an all-women OUT study centre. This is one way to include the social component of learning which is most familiar to these women. In addition, they could

support extra OUT training in community services for programs such as women's studies, gender studies, community studies vocational training and recreational activities. They can include both men and women and family member units to help bring about gender awareness which findings from the Women Focus Group (1999) indicate are critically important in bringing about women's cultural liberation in their communities.

4. The OUT should consider providing greater flexibility with the time and nature of the learning tasks such as the home work exercises, timed tests, and the examination requirements by building them into the students' learning and evaluation requirements. In terms of evaluation (written homework, timed tests, annual examinations), more liberal approaches could be used. For instance, the examinations could be much more flexible and less rigid with timelines and nature. Specifically written exams could be offered more frequently than once a term and allowances should be made for women who miss the examination day due to family circumstances. Some examinations could be replaced by term papers in the course unit, or done as research papers (to also support OUT research work through student studies) for, as many women observed, the strict timelines in use do not take into consideration women's multi-role responsibilities.

5. Despite the present lack of funding, the OUT must seek sympathetic donor support so that it may pursue the use of computer based programs and e-mail communications in its orientation, tutoring, guidance and counseling services. The culture which prevent women freedom for movement from their homes, and the problem of escalating HIV/AIDS illness makes most men and relatives more reluctant to allow women free movement and meetings with male students in public places without their spouses and or a reliable relative around. This makes the whole idea of group discussion in the present study centers very difficult for most women. As such this suggests the prime importance of women discussing with subject peers through emails. Also many Tanzanian businesses and employers use computers and the Internet and it is important that OUT staff and students develop experience with these information technologies. While Internet access may not be available in many local centres, the use of computers in schools is becoming more common, and the need for cheaper and easy updates of information through

computer aided programs rather than depending on library references (which have many outdated information, and cost much more time and money for each individual student library search) is becoming more demanding. This puts the need for computers in distance learning a priority for developing nations in particular. The women would gain more access to communicate with other women and male students outside their communities. They will gain better competency in the new LTs' skills without having to move from their local communities. They will have the "women only community based study centre" furnished with computer lab, lab assistant, server, printer, photocopier, and paper (for community use) to help students download, print and duplicate copies for whatever study materials, while they can be helped to learn the computers skills at each individual student pace.

6. In terms of the practical sessions in science courses, new provisions need to be made to ensure that women have equal access, and can participate in these sessions.
   As the findings in this study indicate, most women, unless they have their husbands' consent, support, have the necessary finances, and can observe that their lives will be safe, and their children and the family well taken care of, will never go for any kind of training after they are married. Special provisions need to be made to ensure that women seeking to take science courses are not barred from them for these reasons. Options the OUT could consider include: better constructed, safer, and cleaner accommodations for women students close to regional centres; specific programs which include full board and lodging, medical care, transportation and childcare support, at regional high schools or the conventional universities; traveling laboratories which would set up in local centres eliminating the need for extensive travel.

7. The OUT should seriously consider doing its own production and delivery of its study materials. My over 15 years of working at the Institute of Education as a curriculum developer, developing study materials for secondary school Geography in Tanzania, makes me believe that it would be more appropriate and cheaper for OUT to completely develop its own study materials as was also the experience of Kamau in

Kenya and Botswana. Tanzania has educational policy, and declaration that education be combined with work. This has constantly made the education provided to Tanzanian people be much different from that of many other African societies, as the study materials need to depict to a great extent the needs of the people in a socialistic society based on family-hood. As such many respondents complained of finding difficulties in using books borrowed from Nairobi University and other distance teaching universities. This has made Tanzanian women need most to understand better their own society so that they may be best teachers of the children for the next generation of a Tanzanian society.

8. The OUT needs to reexamine the provision of additional library resources for its students. Mobile library services in combination with community library centres are one option for better delivery of services when women are unable to travel. They could visit each local study centre on a regular schedule to avoid jeopardizing the women's library and research skills, for, as Mcharazo (1999) noted, distance education students are by their nature of their study mode very dependant on learning resources (p. 3), and most of the information facilities required should ideally be provided by the University (p. 95). Perhaps in partnership with community library services, they could include a community based library which would allow for a sharing of costs and an expansion of resources. Since the mobile library could also be supporting other community members' studies and continuing education services with provision of books, audiocassettes, video/film shows, organized drama, visiting tutors, and women peers from other study centres, the use of the mobile library transport services would be fully utilized if properly managed.

9. The OUT has to review its own procedures to ensure that it is accountable on issues of gender. It should require that all staff be made aware of inadvertent gender bias in decision, to review its own policies and to require all its materials to be gender-inclusive. Most male regional directors explained that they cannot really handle the women's counseling and guidance in their regions especially after they go dormant because of the religious and cultural prohibitions of non-relative adult male female

contacts. The OUT has appointed a Dean of Students but, even if she had been issued with travel funds, it would be impossible for one person to travel throughout Tanzania dealing with women's issues, and her position being less executive impossible to impose gender issues on other OUT staff without a deliberate help from the OUT itself as institution. This is one situation where there is inadvertent gender bias. Other participants told me of asking for tuition bursary and being told that given their husband's incomes this was unnecessary. More needs to be done to make OUT staff aware of the situation for many women struggling to complete courses with the OUT and the appropriate support required from each OUT staff member.

10. The OUT needs to reflect its principles in its practices. Many participants both from students and the out personnel observed that the present structures operating at the OUT reflected a dominant male view. Many female students complained that of not really being well understood when presenting views/issues related to their family roles that influence, conflict, or compete with their study needs and they seek support especially with the tuitions fees. They noted that appeals to upper management did not help much as at present all OUT top managers, most regional directors, and all deans of faculties are males which created a circle of males really not aware of the women lives and needs for convenient study at the OUT. The OUT needs to lead the way in ensuring that it models the participation of women in its leadership and management structure, that it sets up institutional procedures to obtain feedback from all students about its courses, management and administration impact to students' achievement, and that it publicizes a summary of students' responses in the major newspapers to demonstrate that it is accountable to the students and to the society it serves.

Reducing Personal difficulties and Constraints and Improving Learning Experiences and Study Conditions

1. Participants often criticized the OUT for its administration, management and operational procedures for not being gender informed, and not making considerations in its students' support services to meet the needs of female students, especially as wives with male control culture, as mothers who are the sole social foundations of their family,

and as students with weak academic and social foundation background. As such the OUT needs to review its students' support services to cater also specific needs of women as per their lived lives in the society. The need to be in the regional centres for extended periods of time need be provided with women hostels with convenient child care and nursing mothers services if the OUT real expects the women to be participating.

2. For the OUT to really expects many women to participate in the regional center activities for the extended periods of time, and be able to meet the board and lodging costs, participants recommend that OUT has to have the "guts" to remove the women from their husbands' control and provide women with full living costs while away from their homes. This suggests that, the Presidential Committee founding the OUT need to be consulted immediately to provide policy to help the OUT assume operational arrangements to fit in with its stated objectives to support more women to study by distance at the OUT. This means that, the OUT should require the government to provide policy to help the OUT consider gender differences to meet the educational needs for girls and women in the society. Many participants pleaded that girls need to be *protected* while they study from the male abuses and fathers' control in deciding how they get their education. They demanded that as adults, women need to be *protected* from the male control of their lives, particularly husband cultural dominance, and women need be understood as potential quality wives, and or mothers (who generate future citizens of the nation) who need different type of treatment in order that they can combine effectively their needs for study, marriage, childbirth and care, and family care roles during their most effective productive period in life (age 21 to 45). The respondents criticized the "cost" excuses often given (by fathers, society, the training institutions and the government) to be the *roots* of marginalizing women education and development in the society, while on the other hand the society reaps maximum profits from works of women which they do without fully developed skills. Respondents observed this to be the source of the world *poverty* in many of the developing societies, while men are seen as coursing and perpetuating the poverty as they continue to refuse women gain good education so as to do better in their roles in society. The respondents perceived that unless the government is willing to invest in girls and women better education, extreme

poverty will continue to dominate the society regardless of much donor support in the other various sectors of national development.

Further Research

This study focused on the barriers and difficulties experiences by women students and potential students of the OUT. Many of the recommendations include possibilities for institutional research. In addition, there are opportunities for subsequent evaluation activities as the OUT implements new practices. Such a body of research is essential if the OUT is to reflect the concerns of its students and staff. I found that longitudinal data were lacking and suggest that further research at the OUT should follow students throughout their degrees to be better able to identify what academic, administrative and social issues the student has to overcome to complete a degree. Another study could examine more specifically the issues surrounding materials, tutoring and feedback within specific courses, over time, and across degrees to get a better sense of the quality of instruction and advice about additional student support features which might be employed.

I started with a declaration of my belief in the importance of encouraging women to enroll in post-secondary education not only because it will enable them to be more informed and aware, but also because these women will understand the value and importance of education and they will be better prepared to participate in the economic activities of the society and to encourage their children to participate in post-secondary education. I believe even more strongly in this position. The OUT is young, dynamic and enthusiastic, but greatly overburdened by limitations associated with funding and staff quality and quantity; it is a novice in its internal research and evaluation to determine its priorities, means and resources and in its management. It has made great strides with little comparatively resources but in so doing has been myopic about the situation of women students. I hope that my findings and recommendations will assist it meeting one of its founding objectives, equity in the higher education of Tanzanian women.

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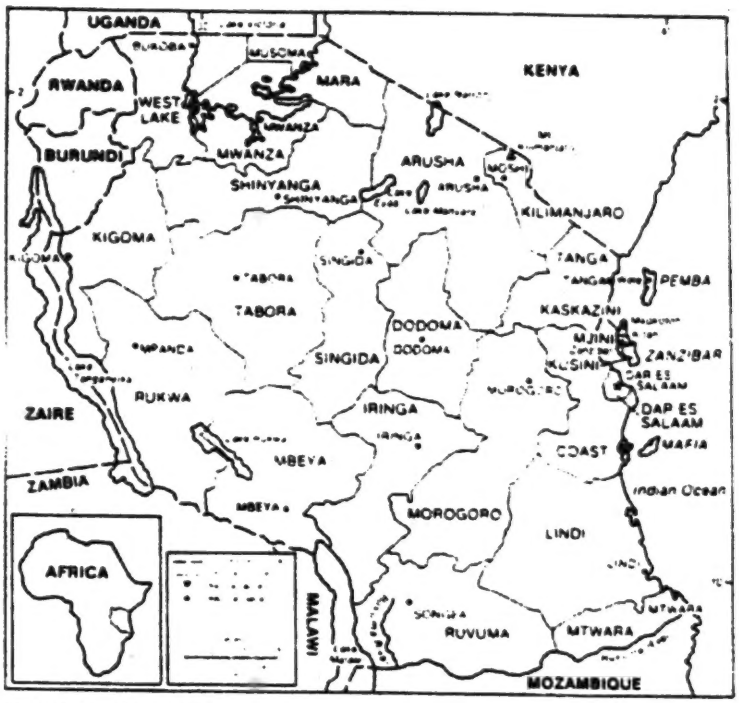
APPENDIX 1

MAP OF TANZANIA

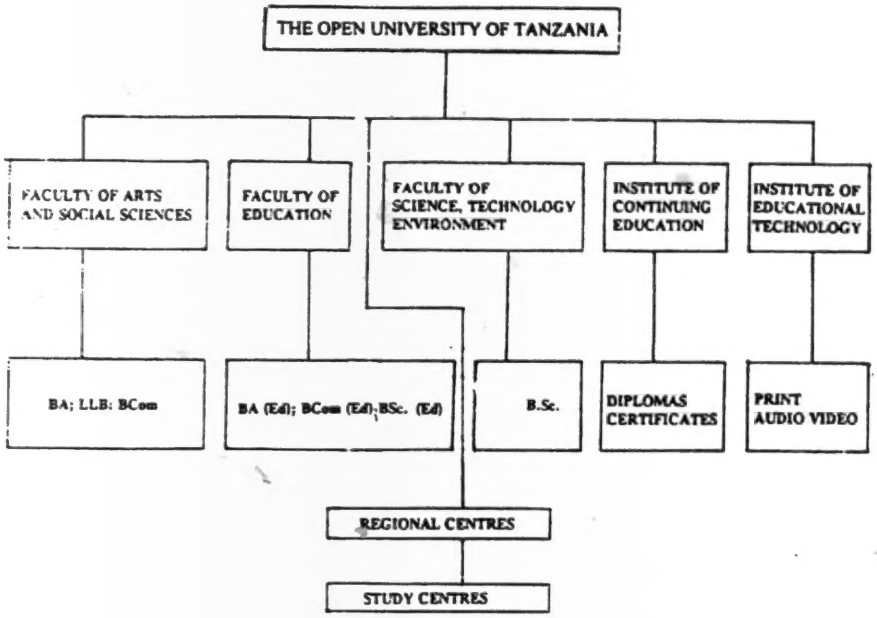


United Republic of Tanzania

Source: Yeager Roger. (1989). *Tanzania: an African experience*. 2nd ed. Boulder: Westview Press. p.[xiv].

APPENDIX 2

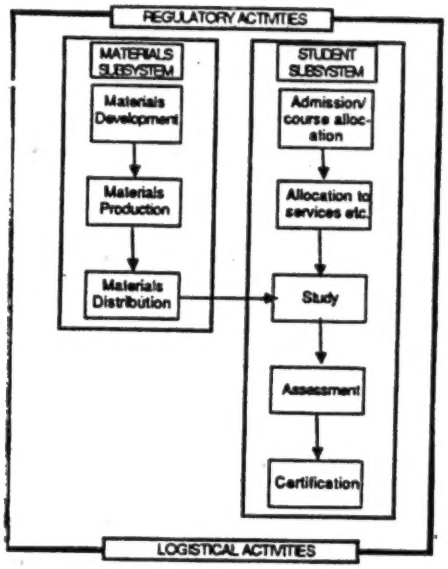
The Structure and Organization of the Open University of Tanzania (1993).



Source: The Open University of Tanzania Tutors Handbook. P. VI

APPENDIX 3

A Systems Model of Distance Education Showing the Materials and Students Subsystems.



Source: Rumble, G. (1986, p. 7)

APPENDIX 4A: TENTATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR OUT WOMEN STUDENTS

NB: Please feel free to give your opinions and give as much information as possible. You are free to withdraw your participation in this study any time you feel so.

1. What is your full name as it is registered with the OUT?
2. What is your OUT registration number?
3. What program are you registered in with the OUT?
4. What is your OUT registered regional center?
5. What is your contact address registered with the OUT?
6. Currently what year are you in with the OUT?
7. (a) What age group do you consider yourself in for the following: 20-25; 26-30; 31-35; 36-40; 41-45; 46-50; 51-55; 56-60; 61+; (b) are you single; married, divorced; widowed? (c) Please tell me how many children you have and their age.
8. Why did you decide to enroll with the OUT studies?
9. Please explain in your order of importance/priority:
   (a) What factors do you think prevent most women from enrolling with the OUT?
   (b) What possible ways you think the OUT may enhance the enrollment of women?
   (c) What difficulties and constraints you think women students experience while studying with the OUT with regards to continuation and completion rates?
   (d) What possible ways you think the OUT may enhance women students effective continuation and participation with regards to course expectation and completion rates?
10. Please explain conditions for your accommodation and study space available in relation to: (a) your home; (b) work place; (c) regional centre; (d) study centre.
11. Please explain (ranking: good, poor, very poor) how satisfactory are the OUT student support services in terms of: (a) accessibility; (b) distance; (c) study materials (d) (e) library services, (f) tutorials; (g) communications (h) feedback; (i) counseling and guidance.
12. What other women do you know are studying with the OUT in your regional centre?
13. What other women (close friends/relatives) you know could be enrolled to study with the OUT but have not enrolled yet?

APPENDIX 4B: TENTATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR OUT WOMEN STUDENTS

NB: Please feel free to give your opinions and give as much information as possible.

You are free to withdraw your participation in this study any time you feel so.

1. What is your full name as you call yourself?
2. What is your contact address?
3. What region do you work in?
4. What is your highest grade attained and professional training?
5. (a) What age group do you consider yourself in for the following: 20-25; 26-30; 31-35; 36-40; 41-45; 46-50; 51-55; 56-60; 61+; (b) are you single; married, divorced; widowed? (c) Please tell me how many children you have and their age.
6. (a) Currently what is your salary scale? (b) Have changed jobs? If yes, why?
7. Please explain (giving five reasons in order of importance) what you think has prevented you from enrolling studies with the OUT?
8. Please explain (giving five reasons in order of importance) what you think prevents majority of women from enrolling studies with the OUT?

APPENDIX 5A: TENTATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR OUT PERSONNEL

NB: Please feel free to give your opinions and give as much information as possible. You are free to withdraw your participation in this study any time you fee so.

NB: Please feel free to give your opinions and give as much information as possible for each question. You are free to withdraw your participation in this study any time you feel so.

1. Please describe your role with the OUT.
2. How long have you been at this role?
3. How do you view the OUT's success with regards to training of women?
3. What would you consider to be the major factors that prevent many women from enrolling with the OUT?
4. What difficulties and constraints do you think women students experience while studying with the OUT?
5. What operational arrangements of the OUT do you think adversely affect:
(a) women's enrollment with the OUT; and
(b) women's achievement and completion rate at the OUT?
6. How can the OUT enhance: (a) women's enrollment; and (b) women student's participation and completion rates at the OUT?
7. What are the limiting factors that prevent OUT from helping women enroll better with the University?
8. What factors prevent The OUT from encouraging women improve on their achievement and completion rate?
9. How do you explain The OUT success (from the first five years) in achieving the teaching of university education to Tanzanian women?
10. The OUT has managed to take university academic studies to women door steps, what would you explain to be the women's response to this chance and privilege?

APPENDIX 5B: TENTATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR REGIONAL DIRECTORS

NB: Please feel free to give your opinions and give as much information as possible. You are free to withdraw your participation in this study any time you fee so.

1. How many students do you have in your region?
2. How many of them are women students?
3. What is the student distribution ratio by sex in your region in each year of study?
4. What factors do you consider have caused women enrollment to remain so low in your region?
5. What steps have The OUT/your Regional Centre taken to enhance the enrollment of women ?
6. What difficulties and or constraints do you consider women students in your region experience while studying with the OUT?
7. In what ways do you suggest the OUT/the Regional Centre can enhance effective continuing participation of women students in your region?
9. In your opinion, how do you think the operational arrangements of The OUT: (a) prevent women students from successful participation in regard to course expectations and completion rates? (b) promote women students successful participation in regard to course expectations and completion rates?
10. What is your opinion in regards to the success of women university education through distance leaning?
11. Please grade in a scale of five (5) points major problems that you think prevent women in your region from: (a) Enrolling with The OUT; (b) effective participation with regards to course expectations and completion rates.
12. Please grade in a scale of five (5) points ways that you think The OUT/the Regional Centre can: (a) enhance enrollment of women in your region, and (b) enhance effective participation in your region.

Documentation. Records of:

13. (a) Distribution by sex for the years of study at The OUT; (b) Regional Women and men performance and completion rates record for each year at The OUT; Number of dormant and dropout women record (please explain how you decide on dormant and dropouts); (c) Number and names of Study Centres in your Region; the approximate distance from the Regional Centre and means of transport to the Regional centre; and facilities in support of the women student needs (e.g. safety, affordable and safe